

## **2005 PNMC Delegate Sessions**

### ***Celebrating Congregational Life*** **Lebanon Mennonite Church**

**Lebanon, Oregon**

**June 17-19, 2005**

#### **Friday – June 17, 2005**

##### **Session I, 9:00 am – 10:30 am**

#### **Welcome/Moderators Comments**

John Willems opened the first delegate session with a welcome to the delegates. He shared some comments on the story of Lazarus, how Jesus took off the grave clothes and set him free. Jesus wants to remove our grave clothes of doubt and set us free. We should go forth in that new life and experience Jesus every day. John closed with prayer.

#### **2004 Minutes**

John asked for any additions or corrections to the Minutes of the 2004 Delegate Sessions. Seeing as there was none, the motion was made to accept the Minutes as written. Motion was seconded and carried.

#### **Recognition of Churchwide Guests**

John invited representatives of churchwide agencies to come forward and introduce themselves to the delegates. The following representatives were present:

Marlene Kroeker – Mennonite Mission Network

Barth Hague – MCUSA Executive Leadership Board and Mennonite Mutual Aid

Ron Ringenberg – Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary

Marty Freeburne – PNMC representative to West Coast MCC Board

Dale Schrag – Bethel College

Phil Bergey – MCUSA Executive Leadership Board

Michele Hershberger – Hesston College

Del Hershberger – Mennonite Mission Network/MVS

### **Greetings from MCUSA Executive Leadership Board**

Barth Hague brought greetings from the broader church and the MCUSA Executive Leadership Board. He reported on the vision and mission of MCUSA – 1) God is calling us to be a missional church – it is not our church, it is God’s church. Our calling is to not only know our own mission, but the mission of God; 2) congregational leadership – pastors are the most influential leaders in the entire church; and 3) developing new global relationships. Each part of church plays an important role of strengthening congregations (Conf. schools, churches)

Barth Hague also represented Mennonite Mutual Aid for Vyron Schmidt. Barth is the Vice President of Marketing Services at MMA. He shared a bit of who MMA is and what they do. Their spiritual foundation is stewardship – holistic stewardship – of all gifts God has given us. This year MMA is celebrating its 60<sup>th</sup> year anniversary. Today they serve 25 different denominations. Services include educational opportunities (stewardship university), financial/trust services, services for businesses, individuals, congregations and conferences, stewardship investing, community development investing, and sharing fund.

The goals and vision of MMA over the next 5 years include 1) Through MMA trust company, they expect to add broader banking services, 2) Add new mutual options to the mutual funds family, 3) Provide stewardship ministries and education to individual congregations, 4) Help individuals and congregations develop holistic approach to health, and 5) Grow their network of field representatives to serve individuals and congregations in local areas. Barth also reported that their current President is retiring this year and they will be searching for new leadership.

### **Updated Treasurer’s Report**

Don Bacher handed out the latest version of the Treasurer’s report for discussion at a later session.

### **Action on Ballot**

Leonard Nolt, chairman of the Nominating Committee presented and reviewed the ballot. The motion was made to adopt the ballot as presented. Motion was seconded and carried. Question from the floor – is there a roster of current committee members? The roster is in the current Handbook, and it was suggested the roster be put in the Delegate book with the ballot in the future.

### **CIHAN Report**

Samuel Moran was not in attendance due to some family matters. In his place, Simon Rendon brought greetings from CIHAN Board and churches. He reported that they are continuing to grow as a group of churches. Currently there are 7 churches, 5 in Oregon and 2 in Washington. Simon asked for prayers as they continue to grow their ministry. He also asked for prayer for Samuel and his family.

### **Structure and Vision Task Force**

Craig Morton reported on the functions of the Structure and Vision Task Force. In September 2004 the Board moved forward to create a 7-10 member task force to look at the structure of conference, since it has been 10 years since the merge of the conferences. The Task Force will be looking back to analyze what we have been doing, and looking forward to determine what the capacity of PNMC is. Members of the Task Force are Mary May Hardt, Larry Hildebrandt, Audry Lowen, Ed Miller, Samuel Moran Jr., Stan Wise and Craig Morton. Duncan Smith participates as a staff person, and Sue Palmer helps with administrative tasks.

Phil Bergey from MCUSA has been participating as a consultant to the group. He shared that it is wonderful to work with PNMC that has so many resources – people, culture, finances, etc.

### **Endowment Report**

Moderator John Willems reported that it was anticipated that we could bring a recommendation on the Endowment to the delegates this year. However, the research took longer than expected, having someone go through archives for information. The Board will continue to look at it and develop it over the next year, and hopes to bring a recommendation in 2006.

-

### **Session II, 1:15 pm – 3:00 pm**

Delegates met around tables in the Fellowship Room. Charlotte provided and explained the process for table discussion. Each table was asked to review and sign the group covenant, and a table recorder was assigned. Table leaders were assigned to each table to help facilitate discussion.

John invited Simon Rendon to the front to introduce Manuel Ruiz, our invited guest from NW Mexico. Manuel brought greetings from the NW Mexico churches. There are currently 12 churches in 2 states in Mexico. Manuel closed by leading in prayer, spoken in Spanish.

### **CIEMNM Covenant Draft**

Richard Micklewright from the Mexico Transition Committee presented the following 2 questions for table groups to discuss:

1. Should the PNMC continue in our leadership with the churches in NW Mexico? At the conference level, what should be involved in this relationship?

2. There has been a trend toward less involvement at the conference level and more involvement by a handful of congregations. If we continue to move in this direction, what do we lose as a conference if we are not involved in this relationship as a group of churches working together? What effect might this have on the individual members and on the collective unity of the CIENMN?

Questions and Comments from the table discussions:

- Several members were not familiar with the relationship between PNMC and NW Mexico.
- Of the 12 churches in Mexico, how many churches are involved? Suggest there be a conference-wide youth trip to Mexico.
- It is beneficial for PNMC to be involved. There should be some encouragement with congregations to be more actively involved.
- Thought there was discussion in past sessions – a plan developed to transition to Mexican ownership. Could PNMC continue the relationship without financial contributions? Should PNMC or MCUSA MMN be involved?
- Yes, relationship should continue. There is concern whether we would lose local church focus. If we reach out too much, are we spreading ourselves too thin?
- Yes, we want to continue relationship – would like to have them come to us, hear more of their stories, possibly by newsletter, Evangel, etc.
- Do the Mexico churches want our involvement? Feeling is yes but language barrier is an issue. Biggest thing we can give is a sense of a culture of 2 peoples coming together.
- Some felt they did not know the vision and goals and would like that clarified. Why was the travel budget increased? Should it be turned over to the national mission? Should we be giving more support to our own conference Hispanic churches instead? What churches in PNMC are really involved?
- Yes – relationship should continue; sister church emphasized; financial support of pastors. Is there confusion among the Mexican churches about what this relationship should look like? If we reduce involvement, what mission focus will replace it?
- Yes, keep it going; conference level needs to communicate more on relationship, how CIHAN could help fulfill conference side of ministry to those Mexico churches. Could new agreement be for a longer period of time?
- There is not much awareness of the churches there, needs to be more cross-cultural exchange. Is the budget for CIHAN strong enough? Does this compete with that?
- Yes should stay involved, strong historical ties with those churches, would help keep evangelistic fervor. Have direct relationship with those churches, conference have umbrella over to sustain relationships.

- Want more information, stories (Evangel), bigger congregational commitment. Do Mexico churches really want to continue the relationship?
- Affirm conference to continue a holistic healthy relationship, but need travel to go both ways.

### **Structure and Vision Task Force**

Craig Morton from the Structure and Vision Task Force presented the following questions for table group discussion:

#### 1. What is God doing in your congregation?

- Ministers to nearby grade school; another church has had so much growth they have had to build on; youth ministry outreach; feeding the hungry (downtown Salem); singles ministry.
- Turmoil, transition, healing, hope.
- Increase in small group studies, youth programs strengthening, monetary contributions, growth in family spirit, work with Hispanic communities.
- Concern for Hispanic population in area, serves low income housing area people by providing meals once a week, taking children to Drift Creek camp; Idaho churches pursuing MCC relief sale.

#### 2. In light of what God is doing in your congregation, what does your congregation need from the PNMC in order to thrive?

- Continue providing resources for understanding peace, youth leaders, pastoral resources, support for finding new ones, continued help in resources for continuing pastors; deal with issues that are common to many congregations; appreciate conference teacher and want it to continue.
- Communication – want to know what’s happening in PNMC, more education about Conference; keep us informed but don’t bother us, help us with worship.
- Support for small church life, help in understanding how to thrive small; more understanding of urban vs. rural settings; continued support from Conference Ministers, more information from Conference through story telling; pastors need to be nurtured better; really need a youth coordinator for PNMC.
- Appreciate level of support and workshops offered by PNMC; appreciate visits to congregations by conference leaders and ministers, continued support for pastor searches, transitions; continued education for church leaders; help in scheduling/facilitate with multiple churches for workshops.
- More prayer support with one another, miss prayer calendar.
- More involvement, less involvement, training provided in other areas than Portland.

3. What other suggestions or guidance would you have for the Task Force as it considers PNMC's direction, purpose and structure?

- Allow flexibility for congregations to have own vision, structure for local congregations to discuss hard issues before conference.
- Help organize regional hymn sings; 3 things for conference to do instead of 30.
- Clear vision by conference helps us know where to connect, want help with local vision, value PNMC support for missions at local level, help with conflict resolution.
- Are we top heavy in conference staff? No – Victor's and William's support and time should be increased.
- Networking of congregations to help each other; foster more interaction or training to help Anglo and Hispanic churches interact.
- Balancing needs between larger and small churches, emphasis on church planting and evangelism.

### **3:15 pm – 4:30 pm Session III**

#### **Resolving Difficult Issues in a Christ-like Manner**

Gary Hooley led in prayer. Pat Hershberger explained the process that PLC has been going through over the last year. About a year ago, PLC began to listen, take counsel and meet with Weldon Nisly regarding his performing a same-sex union ceremony. In late summer of 2004, following MC USA's guidelines, PLC considered Weldon's ministerial credentials under review at this point. There continued to be contact and conversations with Weldon, a Task Force was formed who met with Weldon and the Seattle congregation, who brought back input to PLC. As a result, PLC put Weldon's credentials at variance. Dialogue and communication continued with Weldon. His responses were reviewed and PLC moved to suspend Weldon's credentials. Pat suggests that as we sit at these tables, we are a fellowship of believers, in communion with one other.

Duncan Smith shared that he has experienced personal pain as he has worked through this issue and process because he cares about how we work together and make decisions together. As pastoral comments, Duncan stressed that we are the Body of Christ and God has brought us together today. We need to lean on God's presence today during our discussion. It's okay to have strong feelings and okay to have disagreements in your discussions. In Ephesians 4 it says we are to bear with one another in gentleness, patience and love. We are called to self-reflection. Bear with each other in humility. We are called to work this out together.

Facilitator Ted Lewis prepared the group for table discussion, asking that we discuss and listen to one another on the following 3 areas: questions, concerns and hopes. One way to approach difficult issues is to go to scriptures

that emphasize inclusion, exclusion, and virtues of being in relationship. We need to listen to each other and speak from our hearts.

### ***Questions***

What does suspension mean?

Why only homosexuality?

What does it mean to be a part of conference structure?

How do we stay together as a group, where is the balance?

What is the process for the coming 2 years with Seattle and Weldon?

Should we expect help from MCUSA? Is there a process we can use from them?

Why would a Mennonite minister take action knowing the consequences?

What is the next step PNMC will do? What is the process?

What happens at the end of 2 years?

Is Covenant of Faith a law or guideline?

What does this process mean for the future?

What are we doing to keep Weldon as our brother?

How do we use scripture?

Is this being preached and practiced?

How do we share Christian love?

What motivated the pastor to go against polity?

Is this the only way to force a conversation?

What value is the conference when a pastor goes against polity?

Where does the status of credentials place the congregation in relation to conference?

How are other congregations and conferences dealing with same kind of issue?

What is our history in expectations in seeking counsel of PNMC?

What are we afraid of?

What are we doing about pastors who don't follow other areas?

Is homosexuality a sin?

Role of conference to intervene?

Jesus preached inclusion, also transformation – did that happen here?

How did Weldon break trust?

How was the decision made to go from variance to suspension?

Is there another way for Seattle to retain relationship with PNMC?

When a pastor is ordained, what are they promising to?

### ***Concerns***

How do we have a place in PNMC for the minority voice and what are we going to do to allow for that?

How are we using conference guidelines?

Changing in decision might be viewed as compromising.

The church is not open to gays.

Drifting away from individual approach to God.

Throwing verbal bombs.

Seattle is in total agreement that they need PNMC (comment by Seattle member). Can this relationship continue?

Concern we hear both sides.

Language used to describe – not borrow metaphors from other social issues.

Need to remember he doesn't act alone, represents larger group.

Spend all our energy on this issue.

Decisions made have broader impact.

Redemptive processes does not bring change.

Churches/members leave because of what has happened.

How do we interpret the bible?

How much time and energy this issue is taking.

Are we called to be comfortable in our beliefs?

Should we judge others?

Scripture interpretations – congregations do their own, or should it be Conference-guided?



Seattle may not be in full fellowship.

How are members who are gay respond, rejection, loved?

How do we continue to witness outside our church to homosexuals?

Conference Ministers and leaders are being hurt, concerned for their welfare.

### ***Hopes***

Walk together in the process, hopes Seattle church will not be cut off from our district.

Not allow this issue to overshadow work of the church, not split the church, continue to establish healthy tension.

Hopes this doesn't divide conference. We need healing because there is a lot of pain and division.

Hopes we can learn from this.

Pastoral relationships be able to affirm each other, keep something like this from happening in the future.

Excited to be able to work through this as a group.

Come out of this loving each other more.

Creative moment for church.

Cornerstone for conferences, light we have yet to see from God.

We become stronger from this.

Can continue to work on issue together.

Hopes pastor submits to the will of the conference and there be restoration.

Don't want to see homosexuals excluded from God's welcome, want to see them repent to enter God's kingdom

Finally talking about issues.

Weldon will feel fully heard, and congregations feel fully heard.

Hope can come to a decision soon, can talk about other important issues.

Process and decision might serve as model for other groups.

Remember that adversity strengthens us.

Respond out of love.

Give hope, opportunity to grieve.

All trying to do what is right and faithful.

Pat Hershberger and Wendell Amstutz offered responses to some of the questions. Q: What does suspension mean, what happens at end of 2 years? A: It means for us, as a conference, that we have removed validity of credentials. The Seattle congregation is continuing their pastoral call of Weldon. His involvement with other ecumenical entities will continue, if not dependent on pastoral ministerial credential. At the end of 2 years, if process totally breaks down, the option left, according to polity, is withdrawal of credentials. They hope to make a resolution before 2 years is up, working towards restoration of credentials fully or at variance. PNMC and PLC will continue in relationship with Seattle and with Weldon, and will not be taking any action toward congregation. PLC does not take action on individual church's policies on receiving members. Q: What happened that caused the action to move from variance to suspension? A: PLC asked that this action would not happen again – believe that communication broke down at this point with Weldon. They are continuing to talk with Seattle Mennonite, it is an ongoing process.

John Willems closed this session, asking if there was interest in congregations doing a study on the issue of homosexuality, with conference providing the material/resources. Or possibly interest in a 1-day conference for pastors, delegates, and church leaders to meet at a central location to discuss this kind of issue. Persons may respond to him.

### **Saturday – June 18, 2005**

#### **Session IV, 10:45 am – 12:00 pm**

Pastor Jeanne Rempel opened the session with prayer.

#### **Roll Call of Churches**

Secretary Diane Isaak called the roll of member churches, with delegates from each church standing to be recognized.

#### **Dialogue with the Board of Directors**

Moderator John Willems invited the current Board of Directors to come to seating in the front and introduce themselves. The floor was open for delegates to address questions to the Board members.

Q – Who has been appointed to fill the 2 members-at-large positions?

A – Mary Stutzman from Filer Mennonite and Jack Knox from Salem Mennonite.

Q – Many don't have a real sense of all the programs, ideas, vision, etc. that conference has. Explain more about communication of the programs of conference – how information is getting out, possibilities of doing so more efficiently, information on the website, etc. What efforts need to be strengthened? Not sure all information sent to churches is being used or publicized.

A – There are several ways used to communicate – Evangel, Board minutes are summarized and sent to pastors with a request to share with church leadership, website, at times various committee chairs send newsletters to congregations, conference ministers correspond with pastors and congregations. We used to have 4 main committees write up a bulletin insert once a quarter, one committee each quarter. The delegates found it would be helpful to do this again. We are open to better communication. A representative of the Peace and Justice Committee shared that communication has been a challenge for them. This year they started a Yahoo email discussion group. Charlotte Hardt commented that we could look into getting the history of the Mexico group out to congregations. Sue Palmer, editor of Evangel, asked that anyone let her know how it can be better, welcoming anyone that wants to submit articles, photos, etc. She can also be a point of contact to help get information out, feedback on conference, etc. Don Bacher communicates several times on financial matters with churches, and encourages those contacts to share that information with the congregations. For anyone having contact with NW Mexico, any visual presentation is helpful and needed, which could be made available for all congregations, or presented during moderator visits, etc.

Comment – Ray Kauffman asked if people would please use the PNMC calendar on the conference website for organizing meetings that involve more than just your congregation. Please submit information ASAP to avoid scheduling conflicts.

Comment – The table discussions on Friday were a really good format, but didn't like that delegates and non-delegates were separated.

Q –What is the Congregational Nurture Committee doing regarding a youth minister for conference?

A – Adam Yoder is leading youth activities this weekend. They are in the process of advertising for a Youth Coordinator. It will be dependent upon the results of the budget adoption today.

Comment – In regards to program planning for next year, would like to see Peace and Justice Committee in charge of presenting to delegates and others on what we can do to save our planet, children, etc.

A – Peace and Justice Committee now has a Peace Pavilion which is on display this weekend. Matt Friesen wrote and received a matching grant for this traveling display. It is available for anyone to use. Peace and Justice Committee has also been invited by MCUSA to host the 2006 Regional Peace Gathering.

Comment – Western Mennonite School has a new principal as of July 1 – Darrel Camp was recognized.

### **Action on “Justice Making: The Church Responds to Clergy Misconduct” Document**

Duncan Smith presented this document to the delegates, stating that it is a companion document to “Ministerial Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure” and provides a more rounded picture of how to work through sexual misconduct situations. A few rewrites are being suggested:

- Section VIII – Forgiveness and Restoration – Duncan read the current section and the proposed rewrite. (page 41 in delegate handbook)
- Section XI – Non-Credentialed Leaders – the question was asked as to why this language is not included in the Credentialed Leaders section, speaker felt it should be included in both sections. (page 42 in delegate handbook). A motion was made to include the last sentence of Section XI and add it at the end of Section II. Motion was seconded and carried.
- Discussion on Attachment 1 – “Code of Sexual Ethics for Ministers” – last year when this document was presented, there were several comments that it wasn’t personal enough, that it was written in third person language. It was preferred that pastors sign something with stronger language, written in first person. Thus the “Ministerial Sexual Ethics Covenant” is the rewrite of this document.
  - The motion was made that #2 in the “Code of Sexual Ethics for Ministers” not be underlined and that the signature block be removed. Motion was seconded. Amendment to the motion – If we make changes, they should be made subject to review by an attorney. Motion was seconded and carried.

General questions and comments concerning this document:

- Is there a record retention policy for providing references for the individual in the future? This particular document works more with what discipline should be.
- Were these documents reviewed by lawyers? Yes, both documents were reviewed. We do have an attorney in one of the congregations that they use.

The motion was made to adopt this document and covenant, with the noted changes in the “Code of Sexual Ethics for Ministers.” Motion was seconded and carried.

## **Presentation of 2005-06 Proposed Budget**

Treasurer Don Bacher thanked all congregational treasurers for their work, and thanked all congregations for their continued support for conference. If any congregations have changed or are changing treasurers, please let Don know.

In reference to last year's discussion on the \$300,000, Don met with John Hess Yoder to discuss how to reflect the income that results from those investments, and as a result he has added and changed some things. He noted several new line items – 4303/Note Interest – reflects interest collected on loans, 4703/Investment Interest Earnings – collected on investments, 5908/Structure & Vision.

The amount in the revolving loan fund, when set up, was not set up with a separate line item to reflect interest. All funds went in to the same account. The Board approved moving what we estimated the amount of interest earned over the years to be. The \$300,000 is reflected on the Balance Sheet (320701) and the interest (approx. \$65,000) is reflected in 3500/Net Assets Available.

Last year the Board made cuts to balance budget. By moving the interest money from the Revolving Loan Fund to Net Assets Available, this has freed up funds, enabling us to restore funds to various committees.

Other comments:

- Current giving from congregations is at 94.7% for 2004-2005. This is approximately \$9,000 short of pledges.
- Support for Victor Vargas – last year Victor spent 6 months on Continuing Education leave so we only paid him for 6 months. Up to \$4,000 was available to reimburse him for expenses. This explains the difference in amounts for this year.
- Travel allowances for conference ministers were up this year due to extra trips needed throughout the year.
- Last year we had significant printing costs as the PNMC administrative office was being established.
- This past year Don established direct deposit for staff. Is working quite well.

## **Session V, 1:15 pm – 2:45 pm**

Jose Campoz, pastor of Jerusalem Iglesia, opened the session with prayer.

## Discussion/Action Regarding the 2005-06 Proposed Budget

Treasurer Don Bacher reported that CIHAN's pledges are different this year than in the past. This year individual churches are pledging \$150. This will allow us to see CIHAN's participation and also allow those congregations to have a little more ownership of their giving.

Don pointed out several items on the proposed budget:

- Expanded Vision Funds (4700) – this is money coming from vision funding that is reflected on the Balance Sheet.
- Investment Interest Earnings (4703) is interest collected on investments.
- Funds budgeted for conference ministers' travel has been increased.
- New line items – Peace Pavilion (5606) and Peace Activities (5608).
- Youth Ministry Stipend (5701) and Youth Ministry Expense (5702) have been restored for 2005-2006.
- Mission & Service Grants (5804) – these are grant funds that were taken out last year and are being added back.
- Ethiopian Outreach (581202) is new. Jeryl Hollinger can provide further information.
- Mexico Work (5814) – there is an increase in travel and resource funding to cover trips by Simon Rendon to NW Mexico, Bible School for Samuel Moran, and funds for NW Mexico representatives to come to our annual conference.
- Structure & Vision (5908) – new line items for committee expenses (consultant, travel, etc.).
- Expanded Vision Shortfall (4903) – this is support coming for vision funding outside of the budget. This item is currently \$600 short. (This shortfall was graciously taken care of by an anonymous donation.)

To physically balance the budget, we need \$30,000 more in income. We need to pass a budget, as presented or with changes. Discussion followed.

- In regards to Victor Vargas' salary, at some point we need to move him from Vision Giving and into the budget. If we move Victor's salary into the budget, what happens to the Vision Giving money? We can continue to cover other Hispanic ministries and projects with the funds. It is hoped the Structure and Vision Task Force will have ideas of how to use the funds.
- If you look at total income versus total expenses, there is a \$17,000 surplus. Don answered that all expenses have not gone through yet for 2004-2005, so that is not a realistic surplus.
- One delegate stated they would like to see Victor's salary in the budget. Does the Board have thoughts and recommendations on doing this? John Willems responded that it has been discussed, and our hope is to gradually move him into the budget. Charlotte Hardt reported that it has been discussed with CIHAN. We do need to realize that by moving Victor from quarter to half-time, we are taking him away from spending time at his church.
- A delegate shared that they find our financial reporting very confusing. It would make it much clearer to move Victor in to the budget now, and then deal with where the funds come from. Another commented that we need to "bite the bullet" and move him into the budget now.
- Where is the Vision Giving money coming from? Would it make sense for that money to keep coming in and be a part of that income?
- Has there been discussion of moving the Conference Teacher (William Higgins) in the budget as well? Even if Victor's salary is moved, the budget is still confusing.
- How many staff can a conference our size support? This is something to keep in mind.
- Currently salaries for Victor and William are an expense line but funded by Vision Giving. If the money is not forthcoming, what happens? Don answered that we are coming to a point where we don't have enough funds to guarantee the continuation of these positions. For this coming year, the funds are there.

- Explanation of how the Vision Giving fund started – in 2001 Larry Hauder and others did a bike trip to raise money for this fund. Through the years we have tried to keep everyone informed by letters in the Evangel and also mailings to a donor list (those who have given in the past). Janet Buschert also had a lot to do with it. She has been the person in the past who worked on the letters to donors. With Janet going off the Board this year, who will continue to make sure giving happens? Janet has offered to work on it through the fall for the next letter to go out. The Board will discuss it at their September meeting.

A motion was made that we pull the two budgets together and have Vision Giving under line item Other Income (4102). Motion was seconded and carried.

### **Conference Minister Reports**

Duncan Smith (Team Leader) expressed that it has been a privilege to continue to serve as conference minister, and also has been a privilege working with Sue Palmer over the past year. He referred to his report on page 47 in the Delegate Handbook. Duncan recognizes the considerable time the committees and Board put into the work of the conference. He shared some comments on Friday's round table discussions. Even though it may have been difficult, he heard honest conversation, appropriate questions of how we live together, and a strong desire for us to stay together. He sees this as an opportunity – God has placed us at this time together.

Sheldon Burkhalter was not in attendance due to his mother's illness so did not report. His written report can be viewed on page 48 of the Delegate Handbook.

Victor Vargas referred to his report on page 49 of the Delegate Handbook. He expressed how nice it is to work for the Lord, even with a quarter-time assignment and full time work. His time on sabbatical was a time to refresh his life, spend time in his country with family, and attend a 2-month course at the Latin American Bible University. Victor expressed his appreciation in working with Duncan and Sheldon.

William Higgins shared that he is grateful for the opportunity to serve and teach. His full report can be found on page 50 of the Delegate Handbook. He also announced that he has a display table in foyer with information on the various classes he offers.

### **Conference 2006**

Jeryl Hollinger reported that Mountain View Mennonite Church in Kalispell, Montana will be hosting conference in 2006. They have a committee in place and are working on locations. Possible sites are a motel in the south end of town, or the ski resort on Whitefish Mountain. In deciding the dates for next year, John Willems asked delegates when their area schools dismiss in the summer. Idaho is out in early June, Montana the second week of June, Washington the third week in June, and Oregon also the third week in June. It was decided that we would hold the 2006 conference on the weekend of June 23-25.

### **Session VI, 3:15 pm – 4:15 pm**

John Willems opened the final session with prayer.

John invited Victor Vargas and other CIHAN representatives forward for a presentation. Victor shared that they have been using several church buildings for their meetings, and wanted to do something to show their appreciation. The CIHAN Board had plaques made and presented them to those churches who have been allowing them to use their buildings:

- Warden Mennonite
- Albany Mennonite
- Salem Mennonite
- Calvary Mennonite
- McMinnville Mennonite

### **Gardner Hanks Memorial Peace Award**

Peace and Justice Committee member, Mitzy Zahm, presented this year's Peace Mug Award to Joe Blowers from Portland Mennonite Church for his work in peace and the environment.



### **Structure and Vision Task Force**

Phil Bergy, consultant from MCUSA, briefly shared about ways the task force are trying to discern what God has for PNMC and our organization. Using the analogy of a corn field and garden, he challenged us to think about ways God is impacting who we are, who we've been (corn field), and who we are becoming (garden).

### **Open Mic**

- One delegate read a statement of support for Weldon Nisly's action, and asked the question of what are we doing for our gay children.
- Another delegate shared a personal story of a young student who had taken his life because of the result of telling his parents he was gay. They expressed the thought that we need Seattle Mennonite and Weldon, and they need PNMC.
- Weldon Nisly related that he wants to be present with us and silent at this conference. We are the church. He is committed to us and wants to continue to be a part of us. He is aware of how troubling the implications of his actions are for everyone. He spent 2 ½ years in prayer with careful caring discernment. Weldon expressed that no struggle, consequence, or feeling that we have comes anywhere close to the pain and suffering of gay and homosexual people and their families.
- One delegate encouraged us that as we think about divorce and remarriage, and homosexuality, we think of inclusion instead of exclusion. Grace is what saves us, not mortality.
- Rick Bollman from Nampa Mennonite announced that the Idaho churches are planning a MCC Relief Sale for May 6, 2006 in Nampa, Idaho.
- A delegate stated they appreciated the round-table discussion format on Friday. Conflict is an invitation to intimacy, and hopes we would all remember to pray for each other. A statement from Myron Augsberger – "What you believe is not what the Bible says, it's what you believe it says."
- A comment was shared about moving the Vision Giving budget into the regular budget – make the budget the Vision budget.

### **Blessing for Conference Ministers**

John Willems invited Jeryl Hollinger to come forward. Jeryl led the group in a blessing for our conference ministers – Duncan Smith, Sheldon Burkhalter and Victor Vargas.

### **Commissioning Service for Continuing and New Board and Committee Members**

John Willems asked all continuing and new Board and Committee members to stand for a prayer of blessing led by Duncan Smith.

The 2005 PNMC delegate sessions were adjourned at 4:15 pm.

Respectfully recorded,

Diane Isaak

PNMC Secretary