

Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference

BOARD MEETING

February 27-28, 2015

Pony Soldier Motel, Portland, OR

Members present: Jennifer Delanty, Moderator; Samuel Moran, Moderator-Elect; Brett Tieszen, Treasurer; Wanda Dorsing, Secretary; Jack Swaim, Sarah Hooley, Joseph Penner, Dave Hockman-Wert, Todd Lehman, Nelly Ascencio

Staff: Katherine Jameson Pitts, Executive Conference Minister (ECM)

Guests: Wendell Amstutz, Spanish interpretation Friday; Danny Arguello, Spanish interpretation Saturday

AGENDA

MISSION STATEMENT:

PROMOTE PERSONAL SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT; NURTURE HEALTHY CONGREGATIONS; MAKE STRONG CONNECTIONS THROUGHOUT THE CONFERENCE; CALL EACH OTHER TO FULFILL GOD'S PURPOSE FOR THE WORLD

Friday, February 27th

1:00 pm Jennifer welcomed the group and opened with prayer. Brett led the group in a discussion of birthdays as an ice breaker. Jennifer led the board in Dwelling in the Word from I Thessalonians 5:5-28.

2:00 pm REPORTING/UPDATES

Executive Conference Minister Report - Katherine

Katherine's report included the following items:

- Katherine's work on the MC USA Ad hoc committee on structure is finished.
- Critical health issues faced by Gary Jewell and Jerry Kaiser have highlighted the need for congregations to have a pastoral disability policy.
- Three congregations are in some phase of pastoral transition: Seattle, Prince of Peace, and River of Life.
- Several congregations have been in conversation with Katherine about human sexuality.
- Katherine will attend a workshop in May - "Creating Congregational Cultures of Generosity."
- The Pastoral Leadership Team approved Jennifer Gingerich for licensing.
- Mike and Marlene Bogard will speak at Annual Meeting on the theme of "Opening the Scriptures" from Luke 24:32.
- Ervin Stutzman, Executive Director of MC USA, can come to meet with MC USA delegates for a 90 minutes meeting in early May to go over the delegate agenda and the delegate survey.

Treasurer's Report

- Brett

- The financial picture is positive. Giving is ahead of budget and total expenses came in under budget.
- Seed Northwest money is not being spent. Options include rethinking the program or investing some of the money with Everence. Wendell invited someone to talk to CIHAN about the program at their next meeting.

Board Document Notebook Update -Jennifer

Two documents relating to Annual Meeting were distributed to be added to the Board Documents notebook: "Guidelines for Program Planning Committee" and " Guidelines for Local Arrangements Committee"

Gift Discernment Team Update - Jennifer

The team is currently working on filling nine positions.

CIHAN Report -Nelly

- Recent CIHAN activities include their Christmas dinner, Confraternidades in November and January which were very well attended, and the CIHAN Council meeting in January.
- CIHAN is planning a worship service to celebrate their 17th anniversary this year.
- Pastor Simon Rendon finishes his PLT term this year. CIHAN's Board and Council will work together to select a candidate for this position.

Sanctuary/Peace Property Task Force Update - Joseph

- From Anawim and Bethel City's request for mediation, Joseph and District Pastor Rose Marie Barber have met twice with these two congregations.
- They have identified three areas needing work: communication (being more intentional), safety/security (Steve is coming Sunday morning to make sure the grounds are clean and secure), and management (organizing in a way that more sustainable).
- The group will meet again on April 21 to focus on structure and sustainability.
- Concerning rent, they are still operating month to month with the old agreement.

Western Mennonite School update - Katherine and Jennifer

- Katherine obtained a copy of the WMS bylaws which were last updated in 2002. The bylaws state that WMS maintains a relationship with PNMC. Katherine will meet with Linda Dibble, WMS Board chair, to review the bylaws. WMS articles of incorporation have not been obtained yet.
- The January CCC gave space for discussion of the WMS-PNMC relationship which centered around the school's history and how things used to be done. There was a strong sense that the school and its Anabaptist identity matters. The past mission of WMS may have been to keep kids separate from the world; the current mission is to present Anabaptist values.
- The board brainstormed briefly about what type of interactions and relationship PNMC might want to have with WMS.

Selection of Conference Delegates for MC USA Convention, Kansas City, July 2015

Motion: Katherine, Jennifer, and Samuel will serve as PNMC's delegates to MC USA. MSC -- Joseph, Jack

Upcoming Constituency Leaders Council Meeting

-Jennifer

Katherine, Jennifer, and Samuel will attend this meeting at the end of March.

Resolution on Healthcare in Oregon

-Jennifer

- Ray Kauffman has revised the resolution previously forwarded. The board deliberated about whether to bring this resolution to the conference delegates at June's Annual Meeting.
- There is general support for the idea among board members. Much discussion centered around whether this is best handled as a resolution that all delegates give attention to since it relates directly to only one of the five states that make up PNMC.
- More discussion centered on the role and value of resolutions within conference.
- The issue was tabled until tomorrow.

5:00 pm Supper break

6:00 pm Homosexuality: Discuss CCC Feedback and Where Do We Go From Here ?

- CIHAN has prepared a statement of position regarding our denomination's sexuality debate and a call for continued participation in MC USA.
- PNMC began a conversation process at last month's CCC meeting. Board members shared how the structured talking/listening process used in the morning session worked for their table groups at the CCC. Overall the process worked well to facilitate sharing. The conversation continued in the afternoon in a break-out session where the talking/listening process was not structured. Some tables experienced meaningful sharing while some did not have a lot of listening going on.
- The board deliberated at length about where we go from here. Do we spend delegate time on the issue at our Annual Meeting in June? In what direction are we going as a conference? What is our range of views in our conference about whether our congregations are centers of decision making?
- The future of MC USA is uncertain. The board acknowledges that the congregations of PNMC and the individuals within those congregations are not of one mind on these things. We long for unity of the Spirit in the midst of significant differences.

7:30 pm Personal Sharing

The board concluded the day with a worshipful time where each board member shared his/her journey regarding their understanding of homosexuality. Each testimony was followed by someone summarizing what was said, prayer for the individual and singing.

Saturday, February 28th

8:30 am **Opening sharing and prayer** -- Jennifer

Jennifer shared reflections on " weltanschauung," the space between what is and what could be. She noted that this space can be large or small, it can be full of pain, and that God is there with us. Colossians 3:12-17

9:00 am **TAKING ACTION AND SETTING DIRECTION**

1) **Homosexuality**

- We have differences in the PNMC. Differences are driving others apart. The board deliberated at length asking "*What do we wish to do?*"
- Board members reflected on the personal sharing of the previous night saying that they felt heard, respected, and encouraged by the work of God's Spirit in each life which deepened a sense of community. It was noted that various voices were represented and no one felt the urge to correct or disconnect.
- The board deliberated about what the board could offer to the PNMC congregations that might be helpful as they engage issues surrounding homosexuality as well as what it looks like for congregations to practice mutual submission to each other as described in Romans 14.
- Several board members referred to Andre Gingerich Stoner's document dated October 2014 that outlines options for the path ahead for MC USA. This may be helpful as PNMC looks at the future.
- After listening to each other and talking to each other, the board affirmed that it will continue to work together despite differing views on homosexuality.
- The board identified three steps to guide PNMC
 - 1) We will continue as a conference, acknowledging our differing opinions, respecting, listening, trusting and believing in each others' integrity.

ACTION – Dave will forward Andre's document to the board. Each person may craft a statement of intention for PNMC, which may or may not be based on Andre's document, and send this statement to Jennifer who will work on editing. She will send out edits for response and prepare a statement to be tested at our next board meeting.
 - 2) Define: "What does it look like to remain together?" Examples include engaging scripture, testing the above statement by looking at hard cases, soliciting input from others.

ACTION - Send "hard case scenarios" to Jack for consideration at the next board meeting.
 - 3) Move forward in witness and mission grounded in our shared beliefs.

2) **Next meeting** – May 1-2, 2015 starting at 2:30pm

12:30 - 1:00pm Lunch Break

3) Health care resolution

- Jennifer will talk with Ray to determine if he is primarily seeking an endorsement by PNMC or if he is seeking an opportunity to educate Oregon churches and get buy in from Oregon constituents.
- At this time, the board does not anticipate presenting this resolution to delegates due to its focus on a specific state and the desire that the use of delegate time should align with felt needs of congregations.

Proposed threshold wording for resolution policy– Dave and Katherine

- Dave and Jennifer shared proposed wording to add to the resolutions policy to clarify threshold requirements. The board made some changes to the proposed wording.

Motion: The following wording will be added to the resolutions policy:

"Resolutions will be adopted by a two-thirds majority vote of the delegates present. Any resolution presented after the annual meeting is convened, except for a resolution brought by the Board of Directors itself, will require a two-thirds vote of the delegates present to place it on the floor for discussion."

MSC: Todd, Jack

2:00 pm Jennifer closed the meeting in prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,
Wanda Dorsing,
PNMC Secretary

To Do List

1. Arrange for someone to talk to CIHAN about Seed Northwest. [??????](#)
2. Obtain WMS Articles of Incorporation [Katherine](#)
3. Craft a statement about the way forward for PNMC regarding homosexuality (may refer to Andre Gingerich Stoner's document) and send to Jennifer by>>>>>> [Everyone!](#)
4. Send "hard case" scenarios to Jack [Everyone!](#)
5. Talk to Ray Kauffman about what specific outcomes he is seeking in desiring to bring the healthcare resolution to the delegates. [Jennifer](#)