

Mennonite Church Manitoba
60th Annual Delegate Session
February 23-24, 2007 at Bethel Mennonite Church
Theme: “Living on the Edge”

Friday, February 23, 2007

Leadership Seminar at Sterling Mennonite Fellowship

1:00 – 4:30 **Leadership in a Changing Church**
Len Hjalmarson, seminar & panel leader

7:00 – 9:00 **Worship:**
Kathy Hogue, worship leader

- 1. Prelude:**
- 2. Opening and greetings**
Kathy Hogue welcomed the delegates. Ken Fast Dueck gave greetings on behalf of Bethel Mennonite Church. Kathy read the invocation: Luke 4:18, 19 and prayed.
- 3. Singing:** Darryl Neustaedter Barg,
“Fill us with your feast”
“I’m pressing on the upward way”
#330 (*Hymnal: A worship book*) : “I believe in God”
- 4. Introduction to theme and celebrating 60 years as a community of churches:** Kathy Hogue
Exploring the Theme:
Norm Voth introduced the speaker, Len Hjalmarson. Len is a loving critic of the Church, guiding us to look to the past to renew ourselves for the future.
Understanding Cultural Shifts - Len Hjalmarson
We are living in the midst of a huge transition, from modernity to post-modernity. As this occurs, Christianity must rediscover the purpose for its existence: being an instrument of God’s mission.
- 5. Stories of ministry**
Delegates watched a video updating them on MCM’s ministries: Leadership (Harold Peters-Fransen), Education (Bob Wiebe), and Evangelism and Service (Norm Voth).
- 6. Singing**
“Building (seeking) the kingdom”
“You are holy (Prince of Peace)”
“As long as Jesus is our Lord”
- 7. Births/adoptions, deaths, baptisms**
Delegates viewed a Power Point presentation of all MCM births/adoptions, deaths, and baptisms.
- 8. Communion**
Delegates took part in communion, as led by Rudy Baergen.
- 9. Announcements:** Edgar Rempel
- 10. Benediction:** Peter Zacharias

Saturday – February 24, 2007

Session 1:

- 1. Call to order:** Bernie Tiessen (MCM Moderator)
- 2. Minutes:** Peter Epp (MCM Board Member/Secretary)
Peter reviewed the minutes of the 2006 Annual Delegate Session and the October 26, 2006 Fall Delegate Session. The 2006 ADS minutes were accepted at the Fall Delegate Session.

Motion #1: M/S Peter Epp/Ted Barg

That we accept the minutes of the October 26, 2006 Fall Delegate Session as circulated. **Carried.**

3. **Nominations Committee Report:** Laverne Siemens (Nominations Committee Chair)
Laverne reviewed the work of the nominations committee in 2006 and highlighted current openings. Jakob Schapansky from Sargent Avenue Mennonite was added to the MDS nominations list. Phil Cambell Enns' church listing was corrected as Steinbach Mennonite Church.
4. **Financial Update:** Tom Seals (MCM Accountant)
Tom reviewed the 2006 budget.
5. **Review Agenda:** Bernie Tiessen, Edgar Rempel (MCM Executive Director)
172 Delegates were in attendance, with 42 churches represented. Quorum was reached. Edgar reviewed the instructions for the workshops and afternoon discernment sessions.
6. **Board Report**
Norm Voth (MCM Director of Evangelism & Service) introduced the speaker and read Isaiah 52:7-10. Exploring the Theme:
Church as Alternative Culture: Post Christendom Imagination – Len Hjalmarson
Christ brought a renewed Temple, a living one, when the old one had become static. We need to allow the Holy Spirit to renew us again. To do so, we must see mission as our goal; strive for spiritual formation; and integrate an understanding of “Centered Set” thinking, where we don't focus on where people are in relation to boundaries, but where people are moving in relation to Jesus.
7. **Camping Ministry discernment:**
Introduction of issues and table discussions: Bob Wiebe (Director of Camping Ministries), Edgar Rempel

Plenary – reports from tables, discussion and decisions for direction.

Issue #1: Proposal to increase summer volunteer honorarium

1. Do you endorse the honorarium increases as presented in the table on page 21 of the Report Book?
2. How do you feel about congregations being approached for additional staff support funds in years when they may have “surplus” funds after supporting their own members working at camp?
3. How do you feel about shifting the use of the Camp Office summer staff budget from paying for leadership to assisting congregations and individuals in need?
4. How do you feel about the financial incentives mentioned at bottom of Report Book page 21 under Additional Considerations?

Titus Guenther (Charleswood Mennonite): Why were the CIT's not included? This could encourage more to join.

Bob Wiebe: We'd love to bump that up too, but aren't sure we could find the money yet.

Franz Wiebe (First Mennonite): Why do they have to know already in February? Which young person knows this so early?

Del Epp (Glenlea Mennonite): We have to run a program, so we need to know earlier than June.

Alvin Thiessen (Winkler Bergthaler): We need to offer training to our young people

Kyle Penner (Springfield Heights Mennonite Church): This is a great way to encourage our young people to get involved.

Louie Sawatzky (Bethel Mennonite): I'm in favor of the increase. What's the impact?

Ron Wiebe (Springstein Mennonite): We're always struggling for money in our biggest ministry. Why?

Tym Elias (Home Street Mennonite): In regards to #3: Though I support this overall, I find that this question is counterproductive.

Bob Wiebe: We can continue paying for the leaders, but it gives us less to help others.

Franz Wiebe: Is it possible to ask for a designated amount rather than sponsorship for specific people? This would be easier to budget.

Issue #2: Camp Committee Structure Accountability.

1. Should the MCM board ratify the appointments of the Camp Regional Committee members?

2. Should the Regional Committees be directly accountable to the Director of Camping Ministries in an advisory capacity? If not, to whom should they be accountable?
3. Should Camp Regional Committee members continue to be nominated by the congregation? If not, how should they be nominated?
4. Should Camp Regional Committee member positions have terms?

Fran Giesbrecht (Fort Gary Mennonite Fellowship): Isn't the regional committee already accountable to the facilities committee?

Edgar Rempel: There is some accountability here, but it creates two sets of accountability, one with the managers and the other with Bob. There is not always agreement between the two.

Tym Elias (Home Street Mennonite): Is this urgent? Can we postpone this until next year in the hopes that the Regional Committees would submit their own proposals?

Bernie Tiessen: I think they would have good input, but these are the owners here. They are here as well.

Tym Elias: Could we put our trust in them to develop this?

Bernie Tiessen: They are here as well.

Hank Dueck (Niverville Mennonite): My sense is that we are just getting a sense of the pulse.

Albert Bergen (Crystal City): We would benefit from more information on the different models before we decide on this?

8. Related organization presentation

The Delegates watched a video highlighting the work and needs of MCM's related organizations: Canadian Mennonite University, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Canadian Bible Society, Eden Health Care Services, Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Mennonite Disaster Service, Manitoba Interfaith Council, Manitoba Women in Mission, Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, Mennonite Foundation of Canada, Canadian Mennonite.

9. **Offering & announcements:** Edgar Rempel highlighted the Jake & Dorothy Pauls Pastoral Leadership Training Fund as the offering project.

10. Refreshment break

11. Workshops:

The Life Cycle of the Congregation – Ken Bechtal

New Instruments for Pastoral Review – Harold Peters Franssen

Reframing Evangelism as Mission in the post-Christendom World – Len Hjalmarson

Art in the Church – Ray Dirks

12. Lunch break

13. Discernment on Our Health – Our Future issues:

Discussion of issues & formulation of direction statements (roundtable & plenary within groups)

- **Issue #3:** Leadership Development: facilitated by John Braun
- **Issue #4:** Youth & the church: facilitated by Peter Epp
- **Issue #5:** Dealing with Conflict/Change: facilitated by Lois Edmunds
- **Issue #6:** Responding to our Cultural Context: facilitated by Cheryl Leis

Plenary – Presentation of direction statements, discussion and decisions for direction. Each facilitator reviewed her/his group's discussion and presented the group's direction statement.

CONFLICT/CHANGE:

Because we believe conflict can be constructive, leading the church toward growth,
And we are saddened by the inadequacies of current resources,

Because we hope to overcome our fears of diversity, change and conflict,
And to find creative process to step toward faithful Christian dialogue

We would like MCM to facilitate fora for

- Theological/Spiritual discernment
- Church-wide education and
- Exploration of constructive solutions through practical means.

YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS:

Given that YA's are transient,
Often moving from rural areas to Winnipeg,
And need a space to ask questions, grow,
Be heard, and be in fellowship with others.

We (the big we) should find ways to connect YA's to faith communities
For the benefit of churches and YA's

Given that the church needs to be a place of belonging
For all ages ...

We should create a variety of opportunities for all people to contribute according to their gifts...
For the benefit of all.

ENGAGING CURRENT CULTURE:

Current cultural context:

Many people feeling disenfranchised (lonely) and fearful in response to socio-economic and environmental factors...

Response:

A Christ-Centred inclusive community of caring, belonging and joy.

Benefits:

Everyone would want to come...
Individuals would feel part of community...
Our churches would grow.

LEADERSHIP:

We need...

...to call leaders prepared to equip believers sent for ministry in a changing dynamic world.

... convene a broader/deeper process to discern leadership needs/paradigms...

Delegates responded to the statements presented:

Steve Plenert (Springstein Mennonite): It strikes me that the articulated need for grace sounds a lot like our Grace: Healing & Hope statement. I worry that the young adult section splits this into groups of "us" and "them."

Peter Epp: The "we" that we used was intended to include young adults.

Esther Peters (Bethel Mennonite): Where is our "river" (culture) moving to?

Del Epp: Based on Ken Bechtel's presentation, it feels like we're on the decline cycle.

Tym Elias: The statement on engaging current culture mentions that we are disenfranchised. Is this a negative thing?

Cheryl Leis: Yes, that's a valid comment. We have a strong sense of community as Mennonites when many are feeling lonely.

Peter Dyck: Let's add the word "lonely"

Cheryl Leis: We live in a time where Truth is unknown. We can embrace this as an opportunity.

Laverne Siemens: Is this specific enough?

Peter Epp: This is the beginning. We can shape it from here.

Edgar Rempel: The Board's role is to set overall direction for MCM. This is good fodder for the Board and a very good beginning.

Walter Franz (Riverton Fellowship Circle): In regards to engaging current culture, my concern is that I'm not sure I can always sort out where faith and culture can come together and where they can't. As a Church, we need to pay a lot more attention to that, emphasizing the way in which the Gospel transforms culture.

Titus Guenther (Charleswood): We need to get to know our culture better--carefully, lovingly, and critically.

Motion #2: M/S Judith Doell/Norm Dyck

Whereas there has been some consideration at these sessions on the topics of leadership development, youth and the church, dealing with conflict and change and responding to our culture and context,

Be it resolved that we continue these discussions as an MCM body to positively and creatively respond to the dynamic changes that are impacting our culture and the church, and

Be it resolved that we affirm the direction statements as presented at the 2007 Annual Delegate Session and that they be referred to the MCM board for further discussion and development.

Carried.

13. Outstanding agenda - None.

14. Resolutions

Motion # 3: M/S Gerald Loepky, Esther Peters

Whereas specific financial and operational concerns have been submitted to the board of MCM on February 23 by a group that refers to itself as "Friends of Camp Assiniboia" and,

Whereas issues of financial viability for Camp Assiniboia have also been raised by said group and,

Whereas MCM is currently in the midst of an accountability assessment for all camp operations, including the session of this morning, February 24, 2007,

Be it resolved that the board of MCM continue with the camp accountability assessment, and include the concerns as submitted by said group, reporting back to the delegate body within one year.

Discussion:

Harold Peters-Fransen: Who are the "Friends of Camp Assiniboia" and what are the issues they have raised?

Edgar Rempel: We don't know who is all on the committee. The letter refers to the way in which camp deficit and profit is dealt with. It also addresses the decision to discontinue the horsemanship program in the winter months. We felt that if this was referred to the Board, they could report on it to the delegates.

Albert Durksen (North Kildonan Mennonite Church): This should simply have been addressed to the Board rather than brought up like this.

Carried. Many abstained.

Motion #4 M/S Judith Doell/Albert Durksen

That the board and ministry reports presented in the 2006 Report Book be accepted.

Carried.

Motion #5: M/S Gerald Loepky/Del Epp

That the actions of the Board of Directors in 2006 be approved.

Carried.

Motion #6: M/S Judith Doell/ Approved with applause

We thank the Bethel Mennonite Church for their hospitality in hosting the 60th Annual Session of Mennonite Church Manitoba. We also thank the board and organizers of the session for their leadership in planning this event.

15. Elections: Bernie Tiessen

Motion #7: M/S Laverne Siemens/John Wiebe

To accept the list of nominations presented in the 2006 Report Book and updated at the sessions.

Carried.

16. **Litany of Recognition and Commissioning for persons completing, beginning and continuing terms of service** : Led by Harold Peters-Fransen.
17. **Announcements:** Edgar Rempel, Norm Voth
Norm informed delegates about upcoming workshops on evangelism and faith in our current context. Edgar announced that next year's ADS will be at Steinbach Mennonite Church on Feb. 22-23, 2008.
18. **Sending:** Bernie Tiessen
Bernie reflected on his time as MCM moderator and commissioned Hans Werner. Hans reflected on his role. Bernie called the delegate session to a close. Hans prayed.
19. Adjourn