



**Western
District
Conference**

*An area conference of
Mennonite Church USA*

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WESTERN DISTRICT CONFERENCE MINUTES

Of the One Hundred and Twenty Third
Annual Session of the
Western District Conference
of
Mennonite Church USA

July 4-6, 2014
Waxahachie, TX

Western District Conference Assembly 2014
Delegate Session Minutes, Saturday, July 5 – Morning Session

- I. **Gathering** was provided by the Worshipful Work Team. Sara Dick, Brad Roth, Terry Rediger opened with the song “Santo” (Holy). Brad stated all that we do in word or deed can be lifted up to God, including the work of the church. As we do our work, the worshipful work team will be upholding the group in prayer.
- II. Diana Schunn, moderator, **called the meeting to order** at 10:45 am.
- III. **Credentials Committee Report** – Cleo Koop, Violeta Ajquejay, Judy Schrag, Rosi Jantz
Churches: 57 in WDC and 4 church plants, 305 eligible votes
Delegates: 118 attending, 39 (45) churches and plants, 257 votes represented, 22 (16) churches not represented, 48 votes not represented. *(Final numbers are in parenthesis --Nancy Funk, WDC Administrative Assistant, 7/15/14)*
- IV. **Delegate session proceedings:** Diana explained voting during the delegate sessions will be by show of hands unless anyone requests a ballot.
- V. Highlights of the **minutes of Annual Assembly 2013** were summarized by Wendy Funk Schrag, secretary. **Motion to accept the minutes of Annual Assembly 2013: Motion by Marlene Faul/Larry Dixon. Motion approved.**
- VI. **Church Planting Commission Recommendation/Constitutional Amendments** – Diana provided updates and specific information via power point for changes that need to be made to the WDC Constitution to implement the Church Planting Commission and other needed updates to the Constitution.

Diana invited the group to gather in circles and discuss specific questions, concerns, ideas about the Church Planting Commission. Microphone time followed with the following responses: question about how the Church Planting Commission relates to the Executive Board, more clarification on the term “emerging church.” Clarence clarified the history of the term “emerging church” as the in-between stage of relating to new churches seeking affiliation with WDC that are already functioning churches (Chin Emmanuel is an example). An expression of discomfort was made with removing Kansas Ecumenical from the WDC by-laws. Clarence responded the organization is officially ended, and if there is another entity that forms or that is discovered, WDC would take action to add that organization to our bylaws. The outward reach of the Church Planting Commission was affirmed. A question was asked about how WDC church planting relates and networks with Mennonite Church USA. Clarence provided a response of ways WDC can work with MC USA and other Conferences around church planting. A question was asked about how many people on the Church Planting Commission are ordained and what it takes for a church plant to be a WDC member church. Clarence provided qualifications for churches to become members of WDC. Diana stated three nominees for the Church Planting Commission are ordained. A final comment was made about

the cost of church planting and the ultimate goal of church plants being self-sustainable. Funding in the WDC budget was affirmed.

Motion to accept the changes to the constitution by Guy Smoker/Vern Preheim. Motion approved.

VII. **Camp Mennoscah Report:** John Stoesz, the new Executive Director, and Valerie Klassen, board member, provided a Camp Mennoscah update. Olivia Bartel continues as camp director and Gardell Stucky as maintenance director along with 12 board members. They thanked WDC delegates for support, presented the Camp mission, purpose and objectives. Information was provided about the camp master plan and ways Camp Mennoscah is expanding and advancing its vision for the future.

VIII. **Financial Reports:** Phyllis Regier provided a summary of 2013 financial year: The 2013 audit has been completed and is available upon request. WDC is primarily supported by congregations and constituents (79%). She listed other sources of income. \$548,271 of income was received in 2013. Expenses were \$531,271. Staff transferred the surplus to a church planting fund which brought expenses to \$548,271.

The 2015 budget is \$554,450. Phyllis provided highlights from the line item budget provided to the delegates. The stewardship committee and executive board have accepted the budget.

Motion to approve the 2015 budget was provided by the Stewardship Committee/Executive Board. Motion was approved.

IX. **Election of Board members and Commission members** – Jane McNair provided the slate of nominees and explained the process of the Gifts Discernment Committee. She states they try to focus on diversity in their work and nominations. Diana stated there is one open Board position and invited any additional nominations. None were presented. **A motion was provided by the Gifts Discernment Committee to accept the ballot as presented. Motion was approved.**

X. The **meeting was adjourned** at 11:57 a.m.

Western District Conference Assembly 2014
Delegate Session Minutes, Saturday, July 5 - afternoon

- I. The **Worshipful Work Team** opened the session with a time of group singing, scripture and prayer.
- II. Diana Schunn **called the afternoon delegate session to order** at 1:44 p.m.
- III. Terry Shue with **Mennonite Church USA (MC USA) provided a report** on recent church wide matters, Executive Board decisions and recommendations to inform the afternoon's presentations and delegate discussion. Terry stated that both societal culture and church culture is going through seismic change. He stated MC USA board loves all churches, those at variance with relational agreements and those that are not at variance with them. He stated the church must engage in a process of credibility for developing resolutions and relationships, and that all congregations and conferences agree not to consider altering their relationships with MC USA until at least after the MC USA Convention 2015. He explained MC USA's reaction to Mountain States' licensing of a pastor in a committed same-sex relationship. He stated we must not use the process of restructuring the church to avoid having difficult discussions. MC USA will be conducting a denomination-wide survey in the coming months.
- IV. Richard Gehring, chair of Resolutions Committee and moderator-elect of WDC, **explained the resolutions policy**. Richard stated a resolution arrived from Rainbow Mennonite Church on February 28, 2014, and he referred the delegates to the resolution hand-out. Reference to the proposed resolution was included in the WDC report to the Constituency Leaders Council (CLC) in March. The Resolutions Committee met in March and responded directly to Rainbow Mennonite via a letter requesting Rainbow to reflect on some questions provided by the Resolutions Committee. Rainbow Mennonite responded in writing, and a face-to-face meeting was held with Rainbow Mennonite representatives on April 21. A conference call with MC USA (Ervin Stutzman and Terry Shue) was held earlier that same day to communicate and learn about MC USA's own discernment process. After the face-to-face meeting was held, the Resolution Committee requested that the resolution be presented for discussion purposes only at this time and not for action. On May 6, the WDC Executive Board met and decided to create a Discernment Task Force to oversee the processing of discussion of the resolution over the coming year. Rainbow Mennonite agreed to defer any action on the resolution, and they also made a suggested revision to their resolution. The WDC Executive Board identified the following charges for the Discernment Task Force: Information from MC USA about polity, the proposed resolution, and enhanced WDC delegate involvement.
- V. Keith Jantz, moderator of Rainbow Mennonite Church, provided information about the history of Rainbow Mennonite, including the church's act of welcoming people of same sex relationships since 1979, including action by the congregation that resulted in discontinued membership with the South Central Mennonite Conference of MC USA. Since 1999, Rainbow has continued to work toward greater inclusion of people regardless of their sexual orientation while accepting that not all agree, and they respect each congregation's decisions. **Rainbow presents the resolution** as a way to ease the way for pastors to have latitude to officiate at same sex marriages by only allowing it with affirmation of their local congregation. They recognize this will be unacceptable to some churches. Rainbow's desire is to progress with the discussion without exacerbating the

need for churches to leave. This change is introduced to allow delegates to return to congregations for further discussion, explore possible changes in polity, and determine how any changes in polity may occur. Pastor Ruth Harder presented final comments, stating that the writing and study of the resolution occurred prior to her time, but she supports it. She asked the 10 people at Assembly from Rainbow to stand and encouraged delegates to seek them out for conversation.

- VI. Diana introduced **the Discernment Task Force**, its purpose and members. Diana explained that not only the resolution but also her experience in participating on the CLC helped her to recognize that conference decisions ultimately affect our church-wide body. She repeated the three focus areas for the task force: **(1) processing polity information from MC USA, (2) the proposed resolution, and (3) enhanced WDC delegate involvement throughout the year.** The task force is not a decision-making body but will make recommendations to the Executive Board. Jim Schrag is chairing the task force. Additional members are Kent Moore (Rainbow Mennonite Church representative), Brett Klingenberg (WDC Human Sexuality Task Force), Lee Lever (Ministerial Leadership Commission), Ana Galindo (Executive Board), Diana Schunn (past WDC moderator), and Clarence Rempel (ex officio).
- VII. Jim Schrag explained the **Discernment Task Force approach.** He stated the approach will be to first look at wider polity issues, then the resolution itself, and finally make recommendations to the WDC Executive Board. Jim explained the history of congregational autonomy in WDC, highlighting a document from 1999 that included five areas that congregations were struggling with (one being sexual orientation). The WDC fall Reference Council on November 15 will focus on polity, and the spring Reference Council meeting will focus on the Rainbow resolution and any other statements from other congregations. Jim requests the delegates' help, and states the first step for the Task Force will be an electronic survey of 20 statements to distribute to the members and participants of congregations, in English and Spanish. Responses will be asked to return their responses by July 31. He provided more information about the survey question content. Jim provided some specific questions the Task Force will be working to answer regarding congregational autonomy, mutual accountability, pastoral credentialing, and other issues and questions. Jim states it is not the intent to adopt one or another scriptural interpretation of sexuality. The task force is a consulting body, and decisions will come from the WDC Executive Board. He asked for prayer from the delegates for the work of the Task Force over the coming year.
- VIII. Diana asked the delegates to engage in **circles of conversation** and asked them to discuss the following questions: **(1) What about the proposed process for the next year do you affirm? (2) What additional or alternative actions would you recommend to the Discernment Task Force? (3) What do you still have questions about?** A time of sharing indicated suggestions for how to provide resources at the church level for clarification of terms on the survey, etc., concern about two weeks being too short of a time for returning the survey, how to help people without email access, to add another Hispanic person to the task force, there are more ways to make a decision than simple majority. Would like to see some information on Biblical perspectives provided at some place. Affirmation was expressed for the "anabaptist" way of providing a way for the wider church (electronic survey) to participate in the survey. Jim said, "High-school age on up can complete the survey." Would like other ways than the survey for voices to be heard. A suggestion was made to provide a phone call for reminders to churches, especially Hispanic

churches. More concern was expressed about the two-week time frame, a suggestion of end of August was made. Jim suggested, "The survey can be printed out; please enter those paper surveys into computers at your congregation instead of sending paper surveys to WDC office." A question was asked about whether it's possible for people to complete the survey more than once. Diana responded that it is not possible to "police" this, but a statement will be made in the cover letter asking for people's honesty. Thanks was provided for the thoughtfulness of the process, and another response encouraged delegates to uphold the process in prayer.

- IX. **Richard presented a resolution from the Resolutions Committee:** We, the delegates of Western District Conference, express our hearty thanks to the following:
- The staff of Lakeview Camp and Retreat Center for their attentive service and excellent facilities.
 - The Western District congregations in Texas for their support and assistance in planning.
 - The staff of Western District Conference and volunteers who have prepared so diligently for our conference assembly and for their faithful and creative leadership.
- Motion by Steve Mascho/Bill Klassen. Motion approved.**
- X. **Diana passed the gavel and a cross to Richard and presented him as the new moderator for WDC.** Thanks was provided by Clarence for Diana's years of service to WDC.
- XI. **The Worshipful Work Team blessed the Discernment Task Force.**
- XII. Diana **adjourned the meeting** at 3:20 pm.

Minutes submitted by Wendy Funk Schrag, secretary

Western District Conference

2015 Budget

	Budget 2015	Budget 2014
Income		
1 Contributions	380,350	382,000
2 Church Plant contributions	72,000	72,000
3 Personnel Rebates	23,500	20,600
4 Rent Income	2,400	2,000
5 Refunds	5,000	10,000
6 Restricted Funds-Interest	1,000	2,000
7 Resource Restricted Fund	5,200	
8 Agri-Urban contribution	5,000	5,000
9 Income From Bequest Fund	40,000	38,000
10 Church Planting Fund	17,000	20,000
11 Interest/Market Adjustment	3,000	2,000
12 Total Income	554,450	553,600

Expenses

	Budget 2015	Budget 2014
Executive Board		
1 Executive - Staffing	54,400	53,000
2 Executive - Staff Travel	2,500	3,000
3 Executive - Office Exp	3,000	3,500
4 Executive - Board Exp	2,000	4,000
5 Executive - MCUSA Delegates	3,000	3,000
6 Executive - Reference Council	500	500
7 Executive - Camp Subsidy	4,000	6,000
Executive Total	69,400	73,000

Leadership Commission		
1 Leader - Staffing	116,200	176,350
2 Leader - Ministerial Travel	7,000	12,000
3 Leader - Office Expense	15,000	15,000
4 Leader - Commission Exp	1,500	3,000
5 Leader - Ministerial Credential	1,000	1,500
6 Leader - Seminary Scholarships	5,000	5,000
7 Leader - AMBS-Great Plains		3,000
8 Leader - Meetings & workshops	1,000	1,000
Leadership Total	146,700	216,850

Church Planting Commission		
1 Planting - Staff	68,800	
2 Planting - Travel	5,000	
3 Planting - Commission	1,000	
4 Planting - Church Plant Support	72,000	72,000
Church Planting Total	146,800	72,000

	Budget 2015	Budget 2014
Resource Commission		
1 Resource - Staff	98,000	93,100
2 Resource - Staff Travel	1,500	2,000
3 Resource - Office Exp	7,000	8,000
4 Resource - Commission Exp	250	1,000
5 Resource - Mennonite Archives	2,500	2,500
6 Resource - Library	7,700	7,700
7 Resource - Music & Worship	350	350
8 Resource - Youth	2,000	3,000
Resource Total	119,300	117,650

Stewardship Commission		
1 Steward - Staff	44,500	43,100
2 Steward - Travel	1,000	1,000
3 Steward - Office Exp	7,000	7,000
4 Steward - Commission	250	500
5 Steward - Communications	7,000	8,000
6 Steward - Insurance	7,500	7,000
7 Steward - Audit	5,000	7,500
Stewardship Total	72,250	74,100

Total Expenses	554,450	553,600
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2015 ELECTION RESULTS

Moderator Elect: Anita Kehr

Executive Board: Norma Johnson, Wendy Funk Schrag

Church Planting Commission: Violeta Ajquejay, Nita Nikkel, Virgil Penner, Lici Roth, Lee Suderman, Marv Zehr

Gifts Discernment Committee: Phyllis Goertzen, Brian Stucky

Leadership Commission: Terry Rediger, June Thomsen

Resource Commission: Jeff Koller, Jennie Wintermote

Stewardship Commission: Dwight Flaming, Karen Zehr

CERTIFIED DELEGATES AT 2014 CONFERENCE

KANSAS

1. **Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel:** Linda Ewert, Morris Ewert, Brady Peters, Steve Schmidt (478 members, 16 votes)
2. **Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton:** Marlene Faul, Norma Johnson, Heidi Regier Kreider, Dave Linscheid, Vern Preheim, Patty Shelly (534 members, 18 votes)
3. **Buhler Mennonite Church, Buhler:** No delegates present (322 members, 11 votes)
4. **Burrton Mennonite Church, Burrton:** Jim Gundy, Marge Gundy (43 members, 2 votes)
5. **Calvary Mennonite Church, Liberal:** No delegates present. (26 members, 1 vote)
6. **Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge:** Derek King, Becky Koller, Jeff Koller, Dave Stevens (677 members, 23 votes)
7. **Faith Mennonite Church, Newton:** Grace Bartel, Harlan Bartel, Darlene Powers, Rachel Siemens, James Stucky (187 members, 7 votes)
8. **First Mennonite Church, Halstead:** Jim Loflin, Lois Loflin (248 members, 9 votes)
9. **First Mennonite Church, Hillsboro:** Judy Harder, Keith Harder, Susan Jantzen (281 members, 10 votes)
10. **First Mennonite Church, Hutchinson:** Bill Klassen, Thea Klassen, Cheryl Warkentin, Tanya Wenger (250 members, 9 votes)
11. **First Mennonite Church, McPherson:** Marianne Miller, Dayle Toews (56 members, 2 votes)
12. **First Mennonite Church, Newton:** Anita Kehr, Bryan Kehr, Don Schmidt, Marlene Schmidt, Jim Schrag, Judy Schrag, June Thomsen, (273 members, 10 votes)
13. **First Mennonite Church, Ransom:** Eldon Epp (30 members, 1 vote)
14. **First Mennonite Church of Christian, Moundridge:** Randy Stucky (167 members, 6 votes)
15. **Goessel Mennonite Church, Goessel:** No delegates present. (164 members, 6 votes)
16. **Gospel Fellowship, Montezuma:** No delegates present. (14 members, 1 vote)
17. **Grace Hill Mennonite Church, Whitewater:** Peter Goerzen, Valerie Klaassen, Rob Schunn (232 members, 8 votes)
18. **Hanston Mennonite Church, Hanston:** No delegates present. (50 members, 2 votes)
19. **Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman:** Cleo Koop (213 members, 8 votes)
20. **Hope Mennonite Church, Wichita:** Mike Bogard, Cynthia Loganbill, Marcus Loganbill, Alden Warkentin (240 members, 8 votes)
21. (Church Plant) **Iglesia Camino de Santidad, Liberal:** Jose Moises Romero (75 members, 1 vote)
22. **Iglesia Menonita Casa Betania, Newton:** Jaime Cazares (55 members, 2 votes)
23. (Church Plant) **Iglesia Menonita Aposento Alto, Wichita:** Byron Pellecer (0 members, 1 vote)
24. **Inman Mennonite Church, Inman:** No delegates present. (121 members, 5 votes)
25. **Kingman Mennonite Church, Kingman:** No delegates present. (165 members, 6 votes)
26. **Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church, Wichita:** Linda Buller, Linda Gebert (350 members, 12 votes)
27. **Manhattan Mennonite Church, Manhattan:** Cathy Bitikofer, Barbara Krehbiel Gehring (102 members, 4 votes)
28. **Mennonite Church of the Servant, Wichita:** John Stoesz (25 members, 1 vote)
29. **New Creation Fellowship, Newton:** Renee Kanagy (110 members, 4 votes)
30. **Peace Mennonite Church, Lawrence:** Joanna Harader (80 members, 3 votes)

31. **Rainbow Mennonite Church, Kansas City:** Beatrix Amstutz, Peggy Coriell, Ruth Harder, Keith Jantz, Mary Redmon, Laura Schmidt, Alyssa Bennett Smith, Scott Weast, Debra Sapp Yarwood (258 members, 9 votes)
32. **Salina Mennonite Church, Salina:** Christina Litwiller, Lois Newcomer (61 members, 3 votes)
33. **Shalom Mennonite Church, Newton:** Sara Dick, Marlene Smucker, Stan Smucker, Jeannie Zehr, Marv Zehr (192 members, 7 votes)
34. **Southern Hills Mennonite Church, Topeka:** Larry Dixon, Jocelyn Graber, Cynthia Neufeld Smith, Guy Smoker (112 members, 4 votes)
35. **Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton:** Gayle Funk, Rosie Jantz, Denise Nickel (311 members, 11 votes)
36. **Trinity Mennonite Church, Hillsboro:** Alvin Hett, Arlene Hett, Galen Penner, (200 members, 7 votes)
37. **West Zion Mennonite Church, Moundridge:** Karen Loganbill, Geneva Wedel (196 members, 7 votes)
38. **Zion Mennonite Church, Elbing:** Deanna Entz, Reynold Entz, Rosie Epp, John Janzen, Reinhild Janzen, Raymond Reimer (156 members, 6 votes)

NEBRASKA

1. **Beatrice Mennonite Church, Beatrice:** No delegates present. (136 members, 5 votes)
2. **First Mennonite Church, Beatrice:** Jim Ensz, Merlin Friesen (229 members, 8 votes)

OKLAHOMA

1. **First Mennonite Church, Clinton:** No delegates present. (67 member, 3 votes)
2. **Greenfield Mennonite Church, Carnegie:** No delegates present. (12 members, 1 vote)
3. **Joy Mennonite Church, Oklahoma City:** Johann Reimer (30 members, 1 vote)
4. **Koinonia Mennonite Church, Clinton:** No delegates present (23 members, 1 vote)
5. **Mennonite Indian Church, Seiling:** No delegates present. (12 members, 1 vote)
6. **Turpin Mennonite Church, Turpin:** Ron Ediger, Terry Rediger, Lynette Regier (72 members, 3 votes)

TEXAS

1. **Austin Mennonite Church, Austin:** Lee Lever (50 members, 2 votes)
2. **Chin Emmanuel Church, Houston, TX:** John Sui Hnin, Cung Hup, Biak Mang, Simon Tlumang (230 members, 8 votes)
3. (Church Plant) **Grace Mennonite Fellowship, Gladewater, TX:** Steve Mascho (12 members, 1 vote)
4. **Hope Fellowship, Waco:** No delegates present. (18 members, 1 vote)
5. **Houston Mennonite Church, Houston:** Kathryn Bauchelle, David Bauchelle (50 members, 2 votes)
6. **Iglesia Cristiana Menonita Monte Horeb, Dallas:** Antonio Caceros (20 members, 1 vote)
7. **Iglesia Menonita Casa de Dios, Garland:** Isabel Hernandez (15 membership, 1 vote)
8. **Iglesia Menonita Casa del Alfarero, Pasadena:** No delegates present. (55 members, 2 votes)
9. **Iglesia Menonita Comunidad de Esperanza, Dallas:** Nestor Guajardo (28 members, 1 vote)
10. **Iglesia Menonita Comunidad de Vida, San Antonio:** Dulce Romero-Urbina (7 members, 1 vote)
11. **Iglesia Menonita Luz del Evangelio, Dallas:** Isaias Hernandez, Juan Limones, Oscar Ramos (150 members, 5 votes)
12. **Iglesia Menonita Mi Redentor, Ferris:** No delegates present. (20 members, 1 vote)
13. (Church Plant) **Iglesia Menonita Nueva Jerusalem, Houston:** No delegates present. (15 members, 1 vote)
14. **Peace Mennonite Church, Dallas:** Wayne Albrecht, Ryan Koch, Jared Wirths (82 members, 3 votes)
15. **San Antonio Mennonite Church, San Antonio:** Mitzi Moore (25 members, 2 votes)