

DRAFT

MINUTES of the BOARD MEETING
Mennonite Historical Society of Canada

Conrad Grebel University College
Waterloo, Ontario
Friday, 3 December 2004, 7:00 p.m.

Present: Royden Loewen (President; Chair in Mennonite Studies, University of Winnipeg),
Sam Steiner (Vice-President; Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario),
Victor Wiebe (Secretary; Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan),
Laureen Harder-Gissing (Treasurer; Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario),
Leonard Doell (Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan),
Abe Dueck (Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches),
Henry Fast (Evangelical Mennonite Conference)
Walter Franz (Mennonite Central Committee Canada)
Bert Friesen (Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society),
David Giesbrecht (Mennonite Historical Society of British Columbia)
Lucille Marr (Mennonite Church Eastern Canada)
Alf Redekopp (Mennonite Church Canada),
Judith Rempel (Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta)
Conrad Stoesz (Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society)
Richard Thiessen (Mennonite Historical Society of British Columbia),

Guests: Peter Penner, John Sharp, Ken Reddig, Marlene Epp

1. Welcome:

Sam Steiner brought greeting from Conrad Grebel University College and Roy Loewen welcomed the Board members and gave a brief outline of the proceedings.

2. Minutes:

Victor Wiebe reviewed the minutes of the Winnipeg Board meeting of 6 December 2003. A few corrections were noted. **Moved/Seconded/ Carried (M/S/C) (V. Wiebe/Sam Steiner) – to approve the minutes of 6 December 2003 as corrected.**

3. Business Arising from Minutes:

None specifically noted.

4. Approval of Agenda:

The agenda was approved as circulated.

5. President's Report and Board Report:

Roy Loewen began by discussing the idea of having the Mennonites of Quebec represented by their own historical society and his hope that this could be established by next year. Lucille Marr

described the environment in Quebec with respect to Mennonite interests. Mennonites have been in Quebec for about 50 years and there are some valuable archival resources in the province. Sam reported that a Quebec Mennonite Brethren pastor expressed interested in contributing articles to the CMEO. **(M/S/C) (S. Steiner/L. Doell) - That the Mennonites of Quebec be invited to establish a Historical Society and send representatives to the MHSC.**

Roy discussed the idea that the MHSC establish an award for an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to Canadian Mennonite history. This idea generated considerable discussion. In the discussion several suggestions were made and questions asked. From Roy came the recommendation that the MHSC executive receive nominations from the provincial historical societies. Further, that it is the provincial societies who should make nominations and describe the contribution the nominee has made. He suggested that these be made by 1 October each year. Judith asked that the awards with supporting information and documentation be put up on the MHSC web site. David emphasized that the idea of excellence of the nominee be clearly described. Sam talked about the need to recognize those people whose contributions were beyond the local level and asked: should the contributions also be for the advancement of Canadian Mennonite History? Alf asked the question of whether groups or only individuals could receive this award. Abe asked if the award could also be used to recognize those who are deceased. **(M/S/C) – (A. Dueck/C. Stoesz) – That the Executive develop criteria for this award**

Roy gave some background information about the award and that the idea arose because of Delbert Plett's serious illness. Delbert was a person who has made very substantial contributions to Canadian Mennonite history and has been generous with his resources and some form of recognition was in order. **(M/S/C) (A. Redekopp/D. Giesbrecht) - That Delbert Plett receive the 2004 award.**

More discussion followed which focused on the fact that award criteria have not yet been established and we already have a candidate. Some board members suggested the lack of proper procedures diminished the value of the award. Others asserted that Delbert deserved the award and the lack of proper criteria did not diminish Delbert's qualifications. The procedures and criteria for the award can evolve.

* Abe and Conrad invited the MHSC to Winnipeg for its 2005 meeting at the new facilities of the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies

6. Global Mennonite History Project request

At this stage Roy turned the meeting over to Sam to act as chair and Roy absented himself from the meeting.

Sam reviewed his report and noted discussion will follow at the General Meeting. He said the next volume to be published will be on Latin America. The successful conference held in October in Winnipeg on the "State of the art of North American Mennonite History" was an important part of the preparation for the North American volume. For writing this volume both Roy and Steven Nolt will receive funds for research expenses but not toward their salaries..

Sam reviewed the request from John A. Lapp, Coordinator of this writing project that the MHSC contribute \$15,000. Sam outlined the four possible responses suggested in the report. Laureen reviewed the state of MHSC finances and concluded that we have about \$20,000 available. Victor asked if there would be any funds returned from the sale of the North American volume and answer was – No.

Judith asked about the differences between the budget of the North American volume and the budget for the entire project. Sam explained that the requested \$15,000 is just for the North American volume and funds have already been raised for the other volumes. Lucille asked about other projects that we are expected to fund and whether book sales of Mennonites in Canada would raise funds? Leonard asked about how we could do fund raising for the Global History project and Sam indicated that the Society would have to become active in fund raising. This would be a three year budget commitment. Although our commitments are usually made on an annual basis, we have funded the CMEO on a multi year bases. Sam commented that the \$15,000 is equal to the amount Roy needs for research to complete his part of the project. **(M/S/C) (Judith/Leonard) – That we fund the North American volume project at \$5,000 per year for three years beginning 2004/05.**

7. Bylaw Revisions Motions:

Victor reviewed the revisions for bylaws and there was general agreement to accept them.

The consensus of the members was to recommend the bylaw changes to the Annual Meeting.

8. CMEO report:

Bert Friesen reviewed the past year's development and use of the CMEO. He then reported on the possible expansion plans from one focused on Canada to an international English-language Anabaptist - Mennonite encyclopedia. **(M/S/C) (B. Friesen/A. Dueck) – That the Board approve expansion of CMEO to an international English-language Anabaptist-Mennonite encyclopedia, and that we invite the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA and the Historical Association of the Mennonite Brethren Church to become partners in this expanded international Anabaptist Mennonite online encyclopedia.**

Sam explained that procedurally we first issue an invitation to participate and then the appropriate historical committees of the two denominations will discuss our invitation and hopefully agree to participate. Henry Fast asked if all the materials would still be processed through Waterloo. Sam replied that at the start, yes, but with contributions from the USA there will have to be additional editorial committees formed and procedures would have to evolve. Roy supported this direction but cautioned it would move the project in quite a new direction. If, for example, CMEO dissolves in favor of a broader North American partnership the encyclopedia will be outside of MHSC. Sam commented that the increase in complexity may require employing some permanent staff but whatever happens there will be a much larger encyclopedia. Further, there may need to be some rewriting of present articles since the focus will change from Canada to a world wide audience. Roy asked if there was any indication of how the two conferences in the USA would respond. John Sharp said that there was high interest in the

Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. Roy's final comment was that Manitoba Mennonite Village Museum was once part of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society but it is now an independent body. The enlarged CMEO may be something similar to this.

Bert requested funding of \$6,000 for the CMEO for 2005.

9. Divergent Voices of Canadian Mennonites (DVCM) report:

Roy reported on the very successful six year program, Divergent Voices of Canadian Mennonites (DVCM), for which MCCC gave \$8,000 annually for six years to fund four projects: (1) Aboriginal / Mennonite relations; (2) Mennonite Women's history; (3) History of Latin American Mennonites returning to Canada; (4) South East Asian Refugees coming to Canada. In 2005 a final conference "Mennonites and Refugees: A 25 Year Retrospective" will be held. Thus in 2005 this DVCM program is at an end. Roy asked MCC Canada for a renewal of a DVCM II and there is some indication that they would support such a request. **(M/S/C) (L. Doell/W. Franz) – That MHSC approach MCC Canada with a request for funding of an DVCM II Project; that this be considered as an ongoing project, and as a continuation of the DVCM concept for another six years.**

A number of members pointed out the need to explain the DVCM project to the MCC Canada Board, the staff of MCC Canada, and to its constituency. In the past six years there has been considerable change in the Board and in the staff working with MCC Canada. There is an ongoing need to keep people up to date so that the purpose of the project is understood and supported. The four topics under consideration for the DVCM II project are: (1) Mennonites and Environment issues; (2) History of Money; (3) History of Mennonite Mental Health; and (4) the Mennonite family and sexuality.

Laureen said that she has not seen much material from DVCM that could be used at the local and congregational level and encouraged this to be considered in the planning. The four topics of DVCM were very appropriate and could be useful, for example, to explain to Mennonite youth how it comes about that Aboriginal people could be hungry in Canada. Judith asked if we need to prepare curriculum materials on these topics and Laureen commented that there is not much material on these topics that congregations could use.

10. Mennonites in Canada (MIC) report:

The unsold copies of our three volume publication Mennonites in Canada listed in Ted Friesen's report was noted by Roy. Richard described a small project he carried out to determine libraries that have incomplete sets of our publication. He then suggested that contacting these libraries would most likely result in sales. **(M/S/C) (R. Thiessen/C. Stoesz) – That MHSC hire a student for a short term to do the searching and make the library contacts for sales.**

Richard Thiessen volunteered to coordinate this project

11. Budget 2004/2005:

Laureen reviewed the financial statement.

Laureen reviewed the proposed 2005 budget. Judith asked about the differences in the fees from the provincial societies and it was explained that during the previous year fees were increased with some societies asking that their fee be lowered because of financial exigencies. Laureen explained that the Manitoba Society has designated \$500 for CMEO and \$500 for regular fees for a total of \$1,000. The extra \$500 for the CMEO does not increase the MHSC contribution to that project it only means that CMEO is assured of at least that amount.

12. Nominations Committee report:

Abe reported for the Committee. Ken Reddig has been nominated for President, Sam Steiner for Vice-President; Richard Thiessen for Treasurer, Lucille Marr for Secretary, and Roy Loewen for Member at large.

13. Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned at 9:45.