



Interim Council

Mennonite Church Canada

Mennonite Church British Columbia

Mennonite Church Alberta

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

Mennonite Church Manitoba

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

A Proposal for Revitalizing Mennonite Church Canada & Area Churches: A Working Document

Executive Summary

January 26, 2017

Drafted by Keith Regehr, Transition Coordinator, Approved By Interim Council

The Vision

Vision: Healing and Hope:

God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and,
by the power of the Holy Spirit,
to grow as communities of grace, joy, and peace,
so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world.

For over 20 years, this statement has guided Mennonite Church Canada and its predecessors. This statement remains as the vision for MC Canada. It resonates for many as a powerful description of what we seek in our congregational life, in our life in the larger structures of our denomination, and in our relationships with the global Anabaptist fellowship that we connect with through Mennonite World Conference.

Most of us live our faith, and are called to faith, first in the contexts of our congregations. It is there where we are formed as Christians, and it is from our congregations that we engage mission locally. In the context of our congregations, we work together across our regions and the country in doing mission regionally, nationally, and globally.

The Future Directions Task Force report proposed changes that will strengthen the ability for us to be communities of healing and hope for the world, starting from our local context through to strengthened engagement with the global Anabaptist community.

The proposal is driven by this vision of strengthened congregations, supported by the Regional Churches and resourced by the National Church, working together locally, regionally, nationally, and globally.

Change Overview

The Proposal represents both a culture shift and a corresponding structural change in response to the FDTF Report and Addendum. The culture shift has three key components:

- A refocus on the local congregation as a central place for worship, mission, and ministry.
- Framing the purpose of the Regional Churches as providing supports to congregations as they live out their mission locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.
- Framing the National Church as a place where our sense of peoplehood and identity is strengthened, and as a place where the Regional Churches define national priorities and give life to them.



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Covenant

A new covenant among the Regional Churches has been drafted. The Covenant frames the relationships among the Regional Churches and their commitments to work together on national agenda.

Membership and Governance Structure

Membership in the larger bodies

- Congregations partner together to form their Regional Churches;
- The Regional Churches partner together to form the National Church.

Structurally, the National Church is governed by the Regional Churches through:

- An Annual Meeting made up of the boards of the Regional Churches and Regional Church delegates; and,
- A Board made up of the Regional Church Moderators and 6 members (including the 4 officers) elected by the Annual Meeting.

The executive leaders of the National Church and the Regional Churches meet together regularly as the Executive Staff Group to ensure the good health of the church and its collective mission. This group also attends meetings of the National Board.

National Shared Priorities

A set of national shared priorities has been identified through the Future Directions Task Force Report and subsequent conversations. Some of these will be carried out by the National Church and some by the Regional Churches. There will be regular review through the National Board and Annual Meeting to adapt the shared priorities as needed. The currently identified priorities are:

- Canadian Witness and Relationships;
- International Witness and Relationships;
- Leadership Development;
- Higher Education;
- Support Services;
- Integrated Communication;
- Resources and Resource Sharing;
- Church Engagement;
- Executive Oversight, which includes national gatherings (including Congregation of Ministerial Leadership and study conferences).

Financial Sharing Principles

Beginning in 2018 all congregational giving for denominational structures will flow to the Regional Churches, which will forward a portion of those receipts to the National Church. In addition, the fundraising role will be located in the Regional Churches. The Interim Council and the Executive Staff Group are working with two different models for calculating Regional Church contributions to the National Church. These will be finalized well in advance of the Special Assembly.



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Strengthening of Regional Churches

This approach to funding is meant to leave the Regional Churches with a larger share of the total financial resources across the Church and will enable the Regional Churches to better resource their congregations.

Budget

A budget for MC Canada will be completed once final financial numbers for 2016 are available.

Outline of the By-Law

With the new structure a new by-law will be needed. The by-law will be drafted and circulated in time for consideration by the Special Assembly in October.

Key Leadership Groups

Interim Council

Responsible for overall leadership of the transition process

- Calvin Quan, Moderator, MC Canada
- Aldred Neufeldt, Vice Moderator, MC Canada
- Lee Dyck, MC British Columbia
- Dan Jack, MC Alberta
- Ken Warkentin, MC Saskatchewan
- Peter Rempel, MC Manitoba
- Paul Wideman, MC Eastern Canada

Executive Staff Group

Primary working group for the transition process

- Willard Metzger, Executive Director, MC Canada
- Coreena Stewart, Chief Administrative Officer, MC Canada
- Garry Janzen, Executive Minister, MC British Columbia
- Tim Wiebe Neufeld, Area Church Minister, MC Alberta
- Ryan Siemens, Area Church Minister, MC Saskatchewan
- Ken Warkentin, Executive Director, MC Manitoba
- David Martin, Executive Minister, MC Eastern Canada