Recommendations and Resolutions of the
General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches
in North America

Part 1 1878–1963 pp. 1–175 (in the Adobe Reader page count)


PART I
Recommendations and Resolutions of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches 1878-1963

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Authorized by The Board of Reference and Counsel of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches 1964

Preface to Part One
1878-1963

After receiving the assignment from the Board of Reference and Counsel of the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches in May, 1963, the task of assembling the resolutions and decisions of the Conference from its very beginning in 1878 was begun. The only source from which these resolutions were available, was the General Conference Yearbooks (GCY). The Conference Yearbooks did not appear in print until 1883. The original and several copies from the original of the Conference Reports (minutes) of 1878 to 1882 have been preserved only in written form, except that in 1949, Missionary J. H. Lohrenz prepared a mimeographed manuscript for distribution from the copy from the original prepared by J. F. Harms in 1924, covering the years 1879 to 1882.
The year and page references appearing at the end of each resolution in this book refer to (a) The copy from the 1878 original prepared by Jakob D. Thiessen; (b) the mimeographed copy prepared by J. H. Lohrenz covering the years 1879 to 1882; (c) the one-volume reprint of the printed Conference Reports of the years 1883 to 1919 published by the Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, Hillsboro, Kansas, in 1920; and (d) the individual General Conference Yearbooks of the years 1921 to 1963.
To facilitate finding a resolution on a certain subject, each resolution or group of resolutions has been provided with a heading indicating its content. In order to reduce the volume of this book, the floor discussions surrounding resolutions have been omitted. The resolutions as a whole have been classified according to headings under which they appear in the conference yearbooks.
Resolutions adopted by the Conference have mainly had a three-fold origin or source: from (1) motions made by individual delegates usually following a discussion of the point in question; (2) recommendations made by committees or boards in charge of the respective Conference endeavor; (3) recommendations made by the Board (committee) of Reference and Counsel.
In this book the principle is being followed, that any recommendation or motion, whether originated by an individual delegate, a board, or a committee, if accepted by the Conference, becomes a Conference resolution, and therefore it is listed as such. Only resolutions actually adopted by the Conference are reported in this volume.
It is to be noted also that up to about 1919 most of the business was done on the conference floor by the entire delegation. Hence many resolutions up to 1919 regulate details which after that period of time were relegated to committees or boards. With the Conference meeting but
once in three years, after the 1909-1912 interim, it became necessary to grant more authority to committees and boards to make decisions of operational nature, and for the Conference to reserve the prerogative of deciding on principles and policies. Until 1943 the General Conference Yearbooks appear in the German language which required that all resolutions for this book prior to this date be translated into the English. Although expressed in free translation, a special effort has been made to convey the exact meaning of each resolution. Beginning in 1945 the General Conference Yearbooks appear in the English language, and much, in fact most, of the content consists in reports by committees and boards and their recommendations. Conference delegate discussions on the floor have declined to a minimum.

It is my sincere hope and prayer that in the Lord's good Providence this compilation of the resolutions of our brotherhood through the years, may prove greatly helpful in giving information as well as direction to the Conference, its laity, and leadership, in discharging and expanding its world-wide spiritual ministry in the name and power of our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ (Matt. 28: 18-20).

Hillsboro, Kansas                        A. E. Janzen

August 1, 1964
Recommendations and Resolutions

ADMISSION TO CONFERENCE SESSIONS

1879 -- Admission to Conference sessions
That no one who is not of our faith should be admitted to our Conference sessions.
GCY, 1879, p. 2, Manuscript.

1897 -- Open and closed meetings
That the Conference hold open Conference meetings during the devotional and worship services, and closed sessions when considering matters of business relating to missions and similar endeavors. GCY, 1897, p. 198.

ADVENTISTS

1885 -- Adventists and church membership
That in answer to the question, "May we accept into membership without baptism candidates who have been baptized by the Adventists?", the Conference decided that since we only recognize the baptism upon confession of faith, such persons must be examined to ascertain if they were believers when they were baptized. This is in keeping with the Conference resolution passed in 1878. GCY, 1885, p. 36.

AFFILIATION

1936 -- Ontario Conference affiliation
That in regard to closer affiliation of the Ontario Conference, the General Conference is ready to extend the hand of working fellowship to the brethren of the Ontario Conference, but since the two conferences differ in some salient principles and regulations, the Conference is obligated to limit this fellowship in that delegates from Ontario abstain from questions of Conference principles, and in case of candidates for Conference or missionary activity recommend only such as have been baptized by immersion. In all deliberations of general importance and missionary activities the brethren are perfectly welcome to participate. GCY, 1936, p. 68.

1939 -- Extending fellowship to Ontario Conference
That in answer to a letter from the Ontario Conference the General M.B. Conference (as recommended by its Committee of Reference and Counsel) extends full fellowship to all the churches of the Ontario Conference that are of the same faith with the General Conference, that are willing to abide by our resolutions and to share in all undertakings. This covers the members of the churches who are baptized by immersion upon the confession of faith, provided that they submit to all provisions and obligations of our constitution. It will then be registered and officially recognized as the Ontario Conference. This agreement to be in force when the Ontario Conference has accepted the conditions and has published the decision in the Zionsbote. GCY, 1939, pp. 57, 58.

1945 -- Affiliation with K.M.B. Conference
In foreign missions activity. (See K.M.B. Conference).

1951 -- Affiliation, merger, with K.M.B. Conference
(See merger).

AGED, CONCERN FOR

1963 -- Concern for the aged
That because of the inquiries which have come to our Board (of General Welfare) from individuals, groups and old people's homes for information and assistance in meeting the need of the aged, and because this logically falls into the area of general welfare, … the Board of General
Welfare assume the responsibility for the following: (a) to continue to study the need of the aged; (b) give information on the useful, creative services of the older people in our congregation; (c) call periodic conferences of interested people for the purpose of consultation and co-ordination of efforts. GCY, 1963, pp. 113, 114.

AUDITING

1936 -- Auditing committee established
By the adoption of the 1936 General Conference constitution, an auditing committee of three members was established. GCY, 1936, p. 40.

1957 – C.P.A. audit required
That the proposed (Conference) constitution be revised to require an annual C.P.A. audit of all committees handling over $10,000.00 per year, without any further action by either Auditing Committee or approval of the Board of Trustees and that the words "or equivalent by brethren capable of similar service" be stricken. GCY, 1957, pp. 117, 118.

1960 -- Auditing committee dissolved
That the auditing committee (of the General M.B. Conference) be dissolved. GCY, 1960, p. 154.

BAPTISM

1878 -- Form of baptism
That by burying with Christ in baptism, we understand to mean the baptism by immersion backward, as that form indicates laying a body to rest. It was also decided to recognize the baptism by immersion while kneeling or the forward immersion form, provided it was performed upon the confession of faith. GCY, 1878.

1879 -- Rank in baptism
That we only baptize redeemed (saved) sinners, never ministers or elders. This is to answer the question as to whether or not ministers and elders retain their rank when applicants for baptism. GCY, 1879, p. 4.

1904 -- Recognizing baptism of other denominations
That in all cases where baptism by immersion has been administered the prerequisite must be the forgiveness of sin through faith in Jesus Christ. GCY, 1904, p. 320.

Immersion -- See immersion, page 90.

BAPTISTS

1878 -- Fellowship with resistant Baptists
That since we believe and teach nonresistance, we withdraw from the fellowship of the resistant Baptists, sincerely believing that this is in keeping with the Word of God. GCY, 1878.

1909 -- Accepting Baptists into membership
That according to former resolutions, Baptist members may be accepted into full church membership, provided they bring a good report and submit a letter of good standing from the church from which they come. In order not to cause disturbance and hard feeling among the churches, however, great care must be exercised where members have withdrawn from their church for unholy reasons. GCY, 1909, pp. 423,424.

1945 -- Regarding recognition of Baptists for church membership
That since the Baptists today differ so greatly from us in many concepts of a Christian walk, an actual concurrence becomes impossible ... that therefore our churches regard marriage of our members with members of the Baptist church as a stepping out of our church, unless our church can give the latter the testimony of a blameless Christian walk. If a member of the Baptist church wishes to join the Mennonite Brethren Church, the applicant must give testimony of his faith before the church and must declare his agreement with the principles of our church. In case the
church is not convinced of the applicant's spiritual walk, the applicant should be put on probation before he (or she) is accepted into the church. GCY. 1945, p. 72.

1945 -- Church letters from Baptists
That membership letters from the Baptist church are recognized only as evidence that the applicant is not under discipline; in which case acceptance into our church would be impossible (on the basis of a church letter only). "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked" 1 John 2:6. "But if we walk in the light, we have fellowship one with another" 1 John 1:7. GCY, 1945, p. 72.

BEARD

1890 -- Wearing a beard
That the Conference cautions members of the Mennonite Brethren Church not to be a stumbling block to anyone. GCY, 1890. p. 107.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES,
CONFERENCE

1908 -- Board of Trustees established (Directors) A board of directors of three members was established by the Conference by the adoption of the 1907 version of the Conference constitution formally adopted in 1908. GC constitution, 1908, p. 15.
1936 -- Board of Trustees enlarged
The Board of Trustees was enlarged to nine members by the adoption of the 1936 version of the Conference constitution. GC constitution, 1936, p. 18.
1948 -- Deals in and transfers of property
That in view of the great responsibility placed upon the Board of Directors (trustees) and in order to prevent all possible encumbrances regarding the fixed assets of the General Conference ... all deals of the Conference property be negotiated and all transfers of same be undertaken with the knowledge and approval of the Board of Directors (trustees) and be executed as provided for in Article IV, Section 2 D, in the Conference constitution. All deeds of all properties of the General (M.B.) Conference at home and abroad, are ... to be in custody of the Board of Trustees and the Board assumes no responsibility for transactions made by committees or boards of the Conference. GCY, 1948, p. 60.
1948 -- Note due Board of Foreign Missions by Tabor College
That since the principal of the old note due the Board of Foreign Missions by Tabor College no longer bears interest, the amount be written off from the books of the treasurer of the Board of Trustees, and that in consideration of the liquidation of this debt Tabor College from year to year remit 50% of the tuition of the missionary children of parents of our Conference who may be students at Tabor College, and admit such children of missionary parents in our Conference as students at half tuition. GCY, 1948, p. 60.
1951 -- General Conference treasury
That a General M.B. Conference treasury be created in line with resolution adopted by the General Conference in 1948, p. 100, and that this provision be incorporated in the constitution of the General Conference. GCY, 1951, pp. 93, 94, 95.
1951 -- One offering per church per year
That one collection a year per church for this treasury be faithfully and diligently complied with without fail or hesitation. GCY, 1951, p. 93.
1951 -- Sale of church buildings
That a regulation be made in the new constitution which provides that sale of church (buildings) be administered by the respective district (or province) Conferences within which such churches are found.
1951 -- Ministerial retirement
That the details of the plan (submitted by the Board of Trustees) be duplicated and submitted to the Committee of Reference and Counsel for study and approval and then remitted to the various churches for study and adoption if they so see fit. (See ministers retirement) GCY, 1951, pp. 9, 5, 96.

1954 -- Name of Board
That the brethren who hold in trust and administer the money of the Conference continue to be known as the Conference Board of Trustees. GCY, 1954, p. 97.

1954 -- Missionary endowment and educational funds
That the responsibility for retiring the financial obligation incurred through signing of missionary endowment and educational fund notes is strictly the responsibility of the individual church member who signed the note concerned. ... That it is in accord with scriptural teaching that the churches have a definite moral and spiritual responsibility towards those delinquent members who, having freely made a pledge to the cause of missions and to the Lord, default on same without advancing any valid reason for so doing. ... That the missionary endowment and the educational fund be continued. ... That cash donations and notes to bolster the funds shall continue to be solicited, but only with the express permission of the local church. ... To avoid the mistakes of the past. ... And that the Board is willing to entertain advice and assistance from the churches as to how this can be done most efficiently. GCY, 1954, p. 97.

1957 -- Loans to Board of Foreign Missions
That the Conference authorize the Board of Trustees to make loans available to the Board of Foreign Missions up to $16,000 to meet emergencies as stated above (viz. need for funds upon short notice and during summer months when mission receipts are low). GCY, 1957, p. 119.

BOOKS, CONFERENCE ASSIGNED
1954 -- Books assigned by Conference
That the Conference instruct the brethren of the incoming Committee of Reference and Counsel to continue to work on the four Conference assigned books which are to be ready by 1960 as already initiated by the present Committee of Reference and Counsel. ... That the financing for the publication of the assigned books be undertaken by the Conference Trustees, and that the books then be property of the Conference and the receipts of the sale of the books flow into the Conference Treasury. GCY, 1954, p. 20.

1954 -- Sale of Conference assigned books
That the sale of the books authorized for printing by the Conference, be handled through the proper book channels for the Conference and that any money so realized come back to the Conference expense fund which provided the funds for this purpose. GCY, 1954, p. 33.

1957 -- Instruction to Board of Reference and Counsel re book assignment
That the Conference instruct the incoming members of the Board of Reference and Counsel to continue to work with and seek to finish the four books assigned by the Conference for the centennial commemoration of our brotherhood in 1960. The books being in the English language, (as follows): (a) An abridgement of the History of the Mennonite Brethren Church written by Brother (A.H.) Unruh. (b) The book on the Biblical Doctrines of the Mennonite Brethren Church. (c) The book on the Polity and Practices of the Mennonite Brethren Church. (d) The book on the History of Missions in the Mennonite Brethren Church. (and) That the Board of Trustees be consulted about the financial
outlay of the project, the number of books to be printed in each case, and the most advisable method of publishing these documents during the next triennium. GCY, 1957, pp. 113 and 118.

1957 -- Financing book assignment
That the Conference reaffirm its action taken in 1954 on the financing and the ownership of the aforementioned books as recorded in the 46th (1964) Year Book, page 20. GCY, 1957, p. 113. (and) That the Board of Reference and Counsel have the right to appeal to the Board of Trustees for further finances if needed, for the production of the afore-mentioned books. That the Board of Trustees in turn, have the permission of the Conference to ask for a second dollar assessment from the Conference membership during the next triennium for financing these publications, if needed. GCY, 1957, p. 113.

1957 -- Note of gratitude to Brother A. H. Unruh for writing the History of the M.B. Church
That the Conference accept and direct the following note of gratitude to Brother A. H. Unruh: (a) Gratitude. The Mennonite Brethren Church of North and South America is most grateful to God and to our dear senior brother in Christ, Dr. A. H. Unruh, God's servant, for the great service he has been able, by God's grace, to render our church in the production of a large volume on the History of the Mennonite Brethren Church. This work will stand as a monument reminding our people of this choice servant of God, who has labored in our midst. (b) Value of book. That there is no doubt but that this book will be invaluable in the future as source material and that Brother Unruh's interpretations of the various trends and events will remain a testimony to the genius of his spiritual sight, and a guiding influence for coming generations. (c) Prayer for reward. That we pray that God may richly reward Brother Unruh's faithfulness and devotion to God and our brotherhood whom he has faithfully served. GCY, 1957, p.113.

CENTENNIAL

1951 -- Centennial commemoration
That this Conference charge its new Committee of Reference and Counsel to be elected during these sessions to begin to make the necessary preparations for the centennial commemoration of the Mennonite Brethren Church. GCY, 1951, p. 122.

1957 -- Instruction for the 1960 centennial observance
That the Conference instruct the incoming Board of Reference and Counsel and the incoming Conference program committee to jointly plan for an appropriate and God-honoring centennial commemoration of our brotherhood to be observed in 1960 in the individual churches and at our Conference sessions. GCY, 1957, p. 114.

1960 -- Centennial Conference (See also "Merger.")

1960 -- Response to greeting and statement of regret from the General Conference Mennonite Church
That (in) response to the greeting from the General Conference of the Mennonite Church, dated August 12-20, 1959, (GCY, 1960, pp. 37, 38) and the statement of apology by the Centennial Study Conference of the Mennonite Church, dated June 20-23, 1960, (GCY, 1960, p. 38) the following response be transmitted:

The General Conference Mennonite Church,
c/o Dr. Erland Waltner, President, Bluffton, Ohio, Dear Brethren in Christ:
Christian greetings with the words of the Apostle Paul, when he said, "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son" 1 Cor. 1:9.
Pursuant to the official communications and greetings of your Centennial Conference of August 12, 1959 and the Centennial Study Conference of June 20-23, 1960, conveyed to us by your president, Dr. Erland Waltner, we accept your gracious words with a deep sense of humility and appreciation.

The joint efforts of Christian service of both conferences, yours and ours, in the alleviation of suffering, of the peace witness, and of other services of common interests evoke in our hearts a response of gratitude to God that we are enabled to be "laborers together with God." Our desire reciprocates your expressions of concerns for a closer fellowship in the pursuit of these united ventures of faith with an increasing measure of love and understanding for one another.

We, too, share your concerns that the separation of 1860 occasioned "many feelings, words, and deeds that were not brotherly." We recognize that certain attitudes, on our part, have been colored with intolerance, even to the point of reservations of mutual fellowship and love. We deeply regret our failings and weaknesses of the past and hasten to say that we are motivated by the spirit of love to ask forgiveness where we have acted coldly and unbrotherly.

At a time when the world is torn with strife, without and within, there comes to us the fervent plea and heart-throb of our Savior, when He prayed, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they all may be one as we are" (John 17:11b). Even though we have our distinct responsibilities, as separate conferences, we believe it is well-pleasing to God that we express our mutual respect, love and consideration for one another, and so strengthen our gospel witness in a world that is in desperate need of the salvation of God.

Being assured that God looks with favor on "him that is poor and of a contrite heart" (Is. 66:2b), we are, Fraternally yours in Christ, Dan E. Friesen, Chairman, Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church. GCY, 1960, pp. 135, 136.

CHURCH BUILDING FUND

1897 -- Church building fund
That (we) establish a church building fund and turn the administration of this fund over to the Missions Committee. GCY, 1897, p. 198.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

1936 -- Brethren living in discord
That in answer to the question as to how to handle a matter where brethren of different M.B. churches live in discord with each other, the Conference perceived this as an improper relationship and contrary to the Word of God which teaches us to rather suffer wrong than to do it. The case in question should be carefully examined and the innocent exonerated, the other reprimanded. If that is impossible, 1 Corinthians 4:5, would apply in such case. GCY, 1936, p. 67.

1945 -- Immorality (See immorality)

CHURCHES DISSOLVED

1924 -- Letters from and records of dissolving churches
That if a church has been dissolved, the neighboring church officials may issue church letters to the respective members. Church records may be turned over to the conference treasurer. GCY, 1924, p. 65.
CHURCHES, NEWLY ORGANIZED

1924 -- Financial assistance to new churches
That newly organized churches which need financial assistance when building a sanctuary, should contact the neighboring congregations of our constituency for help. Assisting churches should extend such aid according to possibility and necessity in the form of special offerings held for that purpose. GCY, 1924, p. 65.

1927 -- Financial aid to new churches
That if a new church feels the need of financial aid to build a sanctuary, it may direct its appeal to the home missions committee of the district. If the committee is convinced that aid is needed, it makes the necessary recommendation. The respective church may then proceed to request aid from the churches within its district. In exceptional cases aid may be requested from churches in other districts, provided permission to do so has been obtained from the home missions committee of those districts. GCY, 1927, p. 68.

COLONIZATION

1948 -- Colonization and settlement
That we agree to support the resettlement and colonization program as it is possible and practical towards Paraguay, Canada, the United States, or to any other country where our less fortunate brethren may be offered an opportunity to establish a home, earn their own livelihood, and live a life of liberty that assures freedom to worship and serve God and to educate the children in the faith of the Bible and that of our fathers. GCY, 1948, p. 67.

CONFESSION OF FAITH

1894 -- Publication of Confession of Faith
That the Conference publish the (M.B.) confession of faith in the Zionsbote, and to discuss its contents at the next meeting of the Conference. GCY, 1894, p. 167.

1895 -- Printing of Confession of Faith
That the Conference print the Confession of Faith for use in our churches. GCY, 1895, p. 176. (Note. The Confession of Faith of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America was first formally adopted in 1902. It appeared in the German language. A new edition was published by the M.B. Publishing House, Hillsboro, Kansas, in 1916. The first English edition prepared by Dr. H. F. Toews appeared in 1917.)

CONSCRIPTION

1945 -- In case of conscription
That we ask our brethren of the Public Relations Committee to lead us in exercising proper influence against peace-time conscription of our young men, but that in case of its inevitable enactment, we favor asking for special provisions of service in a non-military capacity. GCY, 1945, p. 40.

1945 -- Military conscription
That the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America go on record as being opposed to any type of military conscription and that this decision be sent to Congress and the proper (other) authorities through Brother P. C. Hiebert. GCY, 1945, p. 75.

CONSTITUTION, CONFERENCE

1908 -- Conference constitution
That we adopt the newly revised constitution of the Conference of the Mennonite

1936 -- Acceptance of 1936 constitution
That the changes and modifications
(presented by the committee on constitution
at this 1936 convention) be accepted, (and)
that the 1936 version of the constitution with
the changes be adopted. (See
1936 constitution). GCY, 1936, pp. 6, 34,
35.

1948 -- Committees added to constitution
That the following committees, established
by the Conference, and which have
functioned for several Conference terms, be
added to the Conference constitution and be
provided with governing regulations in the
constitution: the Youth Committee, and the
Sunday School Committee. The latter to be
named Church School Committee, so as
to include the Sunday School, Midweek
Bible School, Vacation Bible School, and
other church school activities. GCY, 1948,
p. 98.

1948 to 1963 -- Note. Changes in the
constitution
Since resolutions regarding changes in the
constitution of the General Conference of
the Mennonite Brethren Church continued
during the years from 1948 to 1963, and
since the Conference operated on the basis
of provisional constitutions during these
years, which provisions were modified from
interim to interim, reference to the
resolutions for change during this period of
time are omitted in this book. The
revised constitution was finally adopted in
August of 1963, at the regular meeting of
the Conference. See resolution on
constitution. GCY, 1963, p. 35.)

1954 -- New constitution presented in 1954
(Beginning of "area" organization.) That the
Conference adopt the revised revision of
the constitution, also known as draft No. 2, as
a working basis for the next three years
(1954 to 1957). (See draft No. 2). GCY,
1954, p. 18.

(Note. The Committee of Constitution,
elected in 3951, had prepared a new revised
constitution to be presented to the
Conference in 1954. This draft contained all
the Boards listed in the 1936 edition of
the Constitution plus the new boards or
committees that had been created by
Conference resolutions since that date. In
1953, the Canadian M.B. Conference voted
that certain activities be made "area"
conference responsibilities, and designated
the following: higher education,
church schools (including Sunday schools),
youth work, home missions. Anticipating
that the General M.B. Conference delegation
of 1954 might accept the "area"
proposition, the Committee on Constitution prepared a
second draft or revised draft, called draft
No. 2. This draft of The constitution
eliminated the above four as General
Conference activities, made them "area"
conference responsibilities, and merely
provided "consultative committees" for these
activities in the General
Conference constitution. It was this draft
No. 2 that was adopted by the
1954 Conference for its working document
for the ensuing Conference interim.) GCY,
1954, p. 18.

1957 -- Re: postponing adoption of
constitution
That in view of the state of flux and growth
which our Conference is undergoing at
present, the adoption of the constitution be
postponed until such time as the
organizational principle of unification be
fully clarified in our Conference. GCY,

1957 -- 1957 constitution to serve as
provisional document during following
interim
That the present proposed document
(constitution) continue to serve as a
provisional constitution also for the ensuing
Conference interim with such changes and
additions as have been or may be
adopted during the sessions of this Conference and that the committee on constitution be instructed to review together with the respective boards or committees the changes or corrections made sufficiently early in 1959 in order that the completed document can be submitted to the district conferences to be distributed to the churches for study so as to enable the General M.B. Conference to complete the final adoption in 1960. GCY, 1957, pp. 14, 15.

1960 -- Acceptance of the revised 1960 constitution
That the Conference accept the revised constitution (This refers to the revisions made in the 1957 draft including all changes which came in during the 1957-1960 interim plus those suggested at the 1960 session of the Conference) presented by the General Conference constitution committee, plus any changes which may occur as the result of the adoption of recommendations or resolutions presented by any board or committee during this Conference session. (For list of changes refer to GCY, 1960, pp. 31, 32). GCY, 1960, p. 32, 33.

1960 -- Re: tenure of office
That the provisions of the revised constitution pertaining to tenure of office may not bar any officers and members of boards and committees from succeeding themselves in their respective positions... the provisions of the revised constitution be observed as going into effect as of the 1957 Conference. This means that all officers and members of boards and committees may succeed themselves in this year's elections for a second term. GCY, 1960, p. 33.

1960 -- Representation at General Conference
That the delegation to the General Conference be made up of one delegate for every 50 (church) members or portion thereof, plus the pastor or church leader or alternate, beginning with the next (1963) session of the General Conference. GCY, 1960, p. 35.

1960 -- Changing name of headquarters from Buhler to Hillsboro
That it be resolved herewith by the delegates of the Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America, convened in regular session at Reedley, California, on November 14, 1960, to change the name of its main place of business from Buhler, Kansas, to Hillsboro, Kansas, and to authorize the officers of the Board of Trustees to process the above change by an amendment to the present charter by the regular legal procedure through the Department of State of the State of Kansas under which laws this corporation exists and functions. GCY, 1960, p. 43.

1960 -- Missionary endowment fund
That the wording of the old (1967) constitution regarding solicitations for the missionary endowment fund be left unchanged. GCY. 1~60, p. 91.

1960 -- Solicitations for missionary fund activity
That to avoid overlapping and confusion in soliciting funds for projects of the Conference, the Board of Trustees in the future solicit for missionary fund activity only; that is, completely vacate the educational endowment field. GCY. 1960, p. 91.

1960 -- Raising interest rate from 5 percent to 6 percent
That due to the fact that interest rates are constantly rising, and due to the large backlog of applications for loans on hand, all future loans with Conference churches be negotiated at the rate of 6 percent. GCY. 1960, p. 91.

1963 -- Final adoption of revised, new constitution
After a brief discussion a motion carried to accept the (August, 1963, version)
constitution with the proposed and accepted changes. GCY, 1963, p. 35.

1963 -- Distribution of constitution
That the (constitution) booklet be distributed without charge. Each church ... to request the number of booklets desired. GCY, 1963, p. 139.

DEACONNESSES

1919 -- Regarding deaconesses
That in response to the question as to whether the Conference should not enter into the endeavor of training deaconesses and recognizing that office, the Conference elected a committee of three brethren to do preliminary work in this direction. GCY, 1919, p. 504.

DEBTS, MORTGAGES, AND THE LAW

1889 -- Extensive debts and complicated business transactions
That because of the dangers, as numerous examples give evidence, that if brethren enter into extensive debts and mortgages, through complicated business deals, and also when brethren resort to legal means of pressure (foreclosure), the Conference seriously warns against such behavior and desires that every brother, rich or poor, keep his conscience unspotted and retain a position of humility before the Lord. GCY, 1889, p. 89.

DEVOTIONAL PRAYER GUIDE

1963 -- Devotional prayer guide
(a) That the recommendation of the Board of Reference and Counsel concerning a devotional prayer guide ... and approved by the joint boards of the Conference ... be accepted and that the Board of Reference and Counsel be charged with the implementation of this project. (b) That a devotional prayer guide be made available to the churches of our constituency. This booklet to include devotional and prayer requests presented by the boards and committees of our General Conference. GCY, 1963, p. 98.

DISTRICTS, AREAS, AND CONFERENCE INTERIM

1903 -- Regarding expansion of the Conference into districts
(a) That since our church (Conference) is expanding into Saskatchewan and possibly into the northwestern territory beyond, the need for enlarging into a northern and southern conference has become evident, to make possible a more active participation and thus help promote the extension of the Kingdom of God. (b) To proceed orderly and in blessing (to meet this need) and to preserve the unity of the Spirit, the committee for Conference expansion recommended the following provision which was unanimously accepted:
(1) That every third year the general Conference take place, at which the following be ordered for three years: foreign missions, publication, education, and all endeavors of general Conference nature. (2) That the southern and northern conferences meet annually, at which home missions and other local matters are discussed. (3) That local churches and stations go with their concerns to the respective conference of which they are a part. (4) That the engagement of evangelists of one conference by the other be done only by mutual agreement. (5) That Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, and Colorado belong to the southern conference, whereas South and North Dakota, Minnesota, Manitoba, and the Canadian Northwest to the northern. (6) Relative to Oregon, the church there may decide whether to belong to the southern or
to the northern conference. GCY, 1903, pp. 280, 281.

1904 -- Districting of Conference postponed
That the item (of expanding the Conference into districts) be left for one year, and that the Conference then consider the matter. GCY, 1904, pp. 308, 309.

1905 -- Regarding Conference expansion into five districts
(a) That the work of expanding the Conference (into five districts) be now begun, but that a general convention of the Conference yet be held next year (1906). GCY, 1905, p. 332.
(b) That a committee be nominated ... by the chairman of the Conference ...to work out a plan proposing the basis on which the Conference is to be divided ... and report yet at this (1905) Conference convention. GCY, 1905, pp. 332, 333.
(c) (The committee reported) That the Conference be divided into five districts: (1) Oklahoma, (2) Kansas, (3) Nebraska and Colorado, (4) Minnesota, South Dakota and North Dakota, (5) Canada. Churches in Oregon and California be free to choose the district which they wish to join. GCY, 1905, p. 333.
(d) That the plan (outlined under c) be accepted, but that each district be at liberty to amalgamate with another district if necessary, and if finding itself too weak to function as a separate district. GCY, 1905, p. 333.

1906 -- Regarding expansion of the Conference
(a) That in order to expand the Conference (into districts) there first be worked out the proper provisions, so that upon the basis of a constitution the Conference be expanded without impairing the overall Brotherhood unity. (b) That the need to proceed in this direction has long been apparent, because our domain is constantly expanding, so that it becomes too difficult to convene as a general Conference every year. GCY, 1906, p. 356.

1906 -- Incorporation and constitution
(a) That we incorporate as one general Conference on the basis of a constitution. (b) That (the brethren) H. Voth and N. N. Hiebert in collaboration with the foreign and home missions committees prepare a proposed constitution and submit it to the next (1907) convention of the Conference for consideration. GCY, 1906, p. 356.

1907 -- Report on constitution
That the Brethren Heinrich Voth and N. N. Hiebert (who reported that they had worked out a constitution, and which had been examined at this convention of the Conference by the foreign and home missions committees and recommended by them for acceptance) publish the proposed constitution in the Zionsbote, so that at the next convention of the Conference the document can be examined paragraph by paragraph, and with needed modifications and supplementations may then be adopted. GCY, 1907, p. 380.

1908 -- Adoption of first constitution
That the (1908 version) constitution (first presented in 1907, and published in the Zionsbote, with modifications made by a special committee of ten appointed for that purpose, which was then read to the delegates of the 1908 Conference) be adopted. GCY, 1908, p. 396.

1908 -- Regarding expansion of Conference into districts
(Since the majority of delegates were against a final vote on the question of dividing the Conference into districts) That the matter of expanding the Conference (into districts) be taken up as point number one on the agenda of the next (19091 Conference according to the following proposed plan, with the provision that the program committee be authorized to make changes in the plan: That the Conference be divided into (districts) (1) Oklahoma, (2) Kansas, (3)
Nebraska and Colorado, (4) Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota, (5) Canada. The churches in Oregon and California are free to choose the district they wish to join. GCY, 1908, p. 397.

**1909 -- Conference organized into three districts**
(a) That the Conference expand into three district conferences which meet annually as follows: The Southern District Conference - Oklahoma, Kansas, and Escondido, California. The other California churches may join either the Southern or the Central district. The Central District Conference -- Nebraska, Colorado, North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Michigan, Oregon. The Northern District Conference -- Canada and Rosehill, North Dakota, Manitoba and Rosehill, North Dakota, may join either the Northern or the Central district. (b) That the district conferences are to deal with home missions and other local matters, and the General M.B. Conference with (foreign missions, publication, education, and) all endeavors of the General Conference. GCY, 1909, pp. 404-409.

**1909 -- The General M.B. Conference interim raised to three years**

**1939 -- Ontario churches admitted as a district conference**
That since the General M.B. Conference, according to its constitution, grants membership to all churches of like faith ... the Conference is ready to grant General M.B. Conference membership to the Ontario Conference. Since the Ontario Conference has been registered with the Canadian Government as "Mennonite Brethren Church," and because of its extended distance from other M.B. churches in America and Canada, we deem it suitable to designate the respective conference as "Ontario District Conference." GCY, 1939, pp. 57, 58.

**1945 -- Note: Northern District Conference changes name and incorporates**
In the year 1945 the Northern District Conference voted to incorporate under the name: "The Canadian Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America." Its charter and bylaws were registered in Ottawa, Canada, under the date of January 2, 1946. (See Constitution, Charter and By-laws of the Canadian Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America, 1946.)

**1954 -- Area conferences emerge**
That the Conference adopt the revised revision of the constitution, also known as draft No. 2, as a working basis for the next three years (1954-1957). GCY, 1954, p. 18. (Note: This draft of the constitution contained the area plan of Conference organization which prevailed until its formal acceptance by the final adoption of the Conference constitution in August, 1963). GCY, 1963, p. 35.

**1959 -- Districts within the United States formally organized into an area conference**
Although the district conferences within the United States had convened as an area convention since October 16 and 17, 1957,
the Central, Pacific and Southern District Conferences formally voted to organize as an area conference on August 18, 1959, under the official name "The United States Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church." (See U.S. Conference Yearbook, 1959, p. 6)

1963 -- Area Conferences established
That to facilitate certain activities of the brotherhood more efficiently, the churches of the General M.B. Conference are grouped into area conferences and district conferences in the U.S.A. and provincial conferences in Canada, and in other areas in accordance with their needs. However, these subdivisions remain organically united with the General Conference and are subordinate to it. Constitution, 1963, p. 19, Sec. 3.

1963 -- Subdivisions of the General M.B. Conference
That, the U.S. Conferences, the Canadian, the South American, European, and any other M.B. area conferences with their subdivisions are organic parts of the General Conference. Constitution, 1963, pp. 43, 44, Sec. 1 (b)

DIVORCE (See also adultery)

1883 -- Divorce and church membership
That in answer to the question relative to accepting into membership a man or woman who has been divorced, married again, and now after conversion seeks membership in our churches, the Conference decided without a dissenting vote that even the seemingly innocent party be barred from membership until God has revealed the innocence by the death of the guilty party. Since marriage is instituted by God himself, His action should be awaited. GCY, 1883, p. 16.

1930 -- Divorce and church membership
That in regard to persons who were divorced and married again and now seek membership in the M.B. Church, the Conference referred to a resolution of 1883 (GCY, 1883, p. 16). The following Bible citations were given to substantiate the position of the Conference: Matt. 19:9; 1 Cor. 7: 10, 11. GCY, 1930, p. 59.

1939 -- Marrying a divorcee
That in reply to the case where a sister of the church has married a divorced man whose first wife is still living, the Conference refers to Conference resolution of 1883, p. 16, and Matt. 19:9; 1 Cor. 7:10, 11. GCY, 1939, p. 58.

DOCTRINES, PRINCIPLES, INTERRELATIONSHIPS OF M.B. CHURCHES, STATEMENT OF

1951 -- An appeal for a reaffirmation of the historic principle of the interrelationship of Mennonite Brethren Churches. Part II, of Statement.
Statement summary: (a) That each local church is independent in the administration of its internal affairs and functions as an independent unit. (b) That we as a Conference are a Brotherhood of Churches. We are, as our official name implies, "The Church" of the Mennonite Brethren Conference of North America, not the Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches of North America. As such we carry mutual responsibility for the spiritual conditions in the churches and for the presentation of the purity of faith and doctrine as expressed in our practice. (c) That we as churches of the Conference recognize resolutions and decisions of the Conference as morally binding and obligate ourselves to observe and carry them out to the best of our ability as faithful and cooperating members of the Brotherhood.
**1951** -- Proposed ways and means to be considered as a possible way to meet the expressed needs and strengthen existing weaknesses. Part III, of Statement.

Board of Elders. The proposition to establish a Board of Elders for the General M.B. Conference was not accepted, but referred to the churches for further study. GCY, 1951, pp. 130, 191, 132, 133, and p. 144, Part III, "Proposed ways and means...."

**1951** – A. Efforts towards unification of our doctrinal position. Part IV of Statement Provisions. (1) That the Board of Reference and Counsel be charged with the preparation of a supplement to our confession of faith in which all doctrinal questions which in the light of present day theological tendencies appear insufficiently covered be enlarged upon for the purpose of further clarity and more distinct definition. (Points which may require consideration in such a supplement are: The filling with the Holy Spirit, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the preservation and security of the believers, eschatology, and others).

(2) Such a supplement shall be prepared within the first two years of the next Conference term, and submitted to the district conferences for consideration on specially arranged faith conferences which may require a time of several days or a week.

(3) That all our ministers and teachers (including the personnel in our educational institutions) obligate themselves to be true to all principles of the confession of faith of our Conference as well as of the supplement after the latter has been adopted by our next General Conference.

(4) That any minister who in principal scriptural points of doctrine cannot agree with the Brotherhood shall consider himself in violation of the vow taken before the Lord and the church at the time of his ordination in which he promised to be faithful and true to the doctrinal principles and practices of the Scriptures as understood by the Mennonite Brethren Conference.

(5) That if at any time a minister brother in the Conference finds himself not in inward agreement with principal points of Doctrine, he is advised to share his difficulty with the Committee of Reference and Counsel of his respective district whose duty it shall be to assist such a brother in the removal of his difficulty through united study of the Scriptures. If such efforts on the part of the Committee of Reference and Counsel fail to accomplish the inward unification, the respective brother shall be asked to withdraw voluntarily from the gospel ministry in our midst.

(6) That where a minister brother, who is not found one with us in doctrine fails to withdraw voluntarily, it shall be the duty of the Committee of Reference and Counsel to notify the local church of such condition who in return is responsible to the Brotherhood to withdraw from such a brother the right to preach in our Conference. GCY, 1951, pp. 133, 134.

**1951** -- B. A suggested Scriptural and practical guide in matters of interrelationship between the church, its ministers, leaders and pastors

That the Committee of Reference and Counsel of the General Conference feels deeply responsible for the complex circumstances which during recent years have repeatedly developed in matters of relationship between some churches, its ministers, leaders and pastors. The Committee recognizes that we as a Conference should have offered more guidance to our churches in such matters in order to prevent procedures and relationships which are unscriptural. We believe that the following recommendations are fully in keeping with the principles which our 32 fathers laid down for us, and that they are fully documented in the Holy Scriptures. Our fathers held that
"according to the practice of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Apostles, God has given to His church the power, through the leadership of the Holy Spirit, to ordain ministers and servants for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Matt. 10, Luke 10, Acts 13:1-4, 20:28; Phil. 1:1; Titus 1:5; Acts 6: 1-7; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4:11-14. (Article III, Par. 37 of the M.B. Confession of Faith). And so, in keeping with this historic view and practice and with the above stated motivation, the Committee submits to the Conference the following outline of Scriptural principles and methods of procedure to be recommended to our churches for guidance until such time, when an official provision for these needs can be made by the Conference:

1951 -- (II The responsibility of the church with regards to the ministry of the church That the example and principles of Scripture as set above in the 37th paragraph under article III, of our confession of faith remains the Biblical standard applicable in all ages of the church. There is to be a praying and expectant waiting upon the Lord for the separation of workers out of the body of the church by Him who is the Head of the church. (a) Ministers and deacons in the church carry the special responsibility to recognize the call of God upon the lives of brethren, and should therefore make it a constant concern to seek the leading of the Holy Spirit in this matter. (b) For practical purposes it is advisable that the ministers and deacons meet once or twice a year, depending on the size of the church, to consider the working of the Spirit in the fellowship so they may discover whom the Spirit has chosen for special service. (Acts 13:1-4). (c) A personal contact with brethren and sisters, of whom the church leadership may have the impression that they have been called of God should be effected to ascertain from them in what fashion the Lord has dealt with them in making known to them His will for their lives. (d) The creation of opportunities for service in the church, in Sunday school, young people's work, and occasional assistance in the presentation of the Word in general assemblies should constitute the second step in the development of church workers. (e) A brother who shows ability in such a ministry and meets the spiritual qualifications for such service (1 Tim. 3:1-7; 2 Tim. 3: 17; 4:25; Titus 1:5-9: 2:7) should be given an opportunity to share with the church fellowship his inward experience of a call to the work. (f) The response of the church to such an expressed inward leading of a brother, confirmed by the impression of the servants of the church to such an expressed inward leading of a brother, confirmed by the impression of the servants of the church concerning such a purpose of God in the life of the respective member, can be voiced in a formal call of the brother to be co-laborer in the ministry of the Word. (g) The confirmation in the act of an ordination should be considered only after such a candidate has proven himself as a fruitful servant and should be carried out under the principles adopted by the General Conference upon recommendations of the Committee of Reference and Counsel. (See Yearbook, 1948, page 106, par. IX). We, as the Mennonite Brethren Church, still consider the above outlined gradual development of a worker the Scriptural method of calling and commissioning a minister. A church that faithfully will seek the Lord's will in the separation of workers out of their midst, will thereby discover great resources for spiritual growth.
We need to recognize that the historic policy of the M.B. Church, to select its leaders and ministers from their own midst, has proven itself very effective and should be continued in the future wherever possible.

The emphasis above does not exclude the recognition that the Lord calls our workers to His service also without the aid of men as was the case with the prophets and apostles and as had the house of Stephanus addicted themselves to the ministry of the Saints. (See Confession of Faith, footnote under No. 39).

(h) In cases, where workers had not the benefit of a gradual development into the ministry of the church, but have come from other circles or schools directly into the church of the M.B. Conference, the candidate is subject to a personal examination by the Committee of Reference and Counsel of the respective district as to his call to the service, his doctrinal position, experience and church practice. Only where the result of such an examination is positive, may the respective worker be invited to become a helper in the service. His confirmation through an ordination should not be considered before he has proven himself as a worker for 2 to 3 years, when his ordination may be considered subject to the regulations of the Conference as to the examination and qualifications.

(i) The spiritual qualifications for a servant and minister are contained in Confession of Faith, Article III, par. 39.

(j) The work of several ministers in one local church of whom one serves as pastor, has proven itself very effective for the strengthening of the spiritual structure of a church, and is also distinctly Scriptural (Acts 13:1-4; 20:17; Phil. 1:1).

It serves also as a supporting, protecting and guiding factor for a pastor in his responsibility of leadership. A cooperative service in the body of a small brotherhood of ministers is the best safeguard for the church and has proven to be possible and very successful where the servants of the Lord had the virtue of humility and love. GCY, 1951, pp. 135, 136.

1951 -- (2) The election of a church leader
Under this heading we choose to treat the principles and policies governing the service and position of a brother who is the responsible leading minister of the church, but follows a vocation or profession to earn his livelihood. The spiritual duties and responsibilities of such a brother in principle do not differ from those of a full-time pastor.

(a) The principle of a church leader earning his sustenance through a vocation or profession that he follows besides the ministry, has proven itself very effective in the history of our denomination and should be encouraged to be continued where circumstances permit this system of church leadership without causing the work of the church to suffer. An assistance of several brethren in the ministry is in such cases essential.

(b) The vocational burden of a leading brother, however, must not become a cause for the neglect of the spiritual program and needs of the flock. Where this danger arises, the church is to recognize its Scriptural obligation to supplement the physical needs of such a brother. Where a mere assistance is not sufficient, the church should not hesitate to adopt the principle of full support for their leading minister in order that God's work may not suffer. (Gal. 8:6; 1 Cor. 9: 7-14: 1 Tim. 5:17-18). The church becomes responsible before God by withholding the needed material support from their laborers and thereby causes the spiritual ministry and care to suffer. GCY, 1951, p. 136.

(c) The appointment of a leader from the ordained, and by the Conference recognized, ministers of the church must also be effected by an orderly election. A minimum of a 2/3
majority vote shall be considered necessary to make an election to this position valid. A majority of 3/4 or over is preferable. A mere majority is not sufficient to call a man into such a responsible position of leadership.

(d) The appointment of brethren to the leadership of the church, who are not ministers, shall only be considered in such cases where a church has no minister, or where there is no one of them qualified for such a position. "In the household of the M.B. Church, the order obtains that an Elder or a substitute for the Elder acts as moderator of local churches and as leader." (Confession of Faith, page 27, Article III, par. 45).

The judgment as to insufficient leadership and administrative qualifications in a minister brother, who is in the church as the only possible candidate for the leadership, should be established by the church in consultation with the Committee of Reference and Counsel of the respective district, before a non-minister brother is elected to this post. As soon as the church again has a minister brother qualified for the leadership, the church should transfer such responsibility to him.

(e) The spiritual qualifications set forth under Article III, par. 39, of our Confession of Faith apply to all servants of the Lord irrespective of the method by which they were called to the ministry.

(f) The time of office. The ministry of a church leader cannot be treated like that of civil office or to that of an officer in a social, political, or philanthropic organization. A God approved appointment of a church leader is the result of divine leading of the Spirit in the church attained through sincere seeking of the will of God in such matters. The respective brother chosen must also experience a personal communication from the Lord, as the Archbishop of the church, who through the Word and the church makes the assignment to such a responsibility. To subject such sacred appointment to the civil principle of annual balloting is a dangerous trifling with very sacred things and offers a wide open opportunity to Satan to weaken the effectiveness of a divine appointment. A church for practical reasons should observe the full right to review the question whether they have understood the Lord in appointing a brother to the leadership; such review possibly to be made after a year of active leadership of the brother, but having found positive confirmation, it is not to be a question subject to an annual ballot election because such procedure is destructive to the principle of divine guidance in the church and in the life of a worker. The stated principle applies to both the case of a church leader as well as a full-time pastor. Principles governing the withdrawal of a brother from the leadership or the dismissal of a brother from the office by action of the church find a careful analysis under par. 4, "Change of Church Leadership and Pastors."

(g) Compensation for service. A church leader, who follows a vocation to earn his livelihood and serves the church without receiving any compensation for the work, is bringing a sacrifice of sweet savour unto the Lord and will be rewarded for the sacrifices which such a service demands. (1 Cor. 9:15-19).

A church, however, is responsible to recognize the tremendous responsibility which such a brother carries before the Lord according to Hebrews 13:17. His position does not only demand much of his time but demands also his best spiritual and mental capacities. Even though a church may receive such service gratefully as rendered unto the Lord, she still remains responsible to the word of Gal. 6:6 and 1 Cor. 9:7-14; and in response to such truth offers an expression of appreciation to such a brother in the form of a monetary gift
or support not to come from individual members of the church but as a presentation from the body of the church only.

1951 -- (3) The selection of a church pastor
Under the given heading are considered principles and policies which govern the various aspects of the ministry of a church leader who is remunerated by the church for his work and gives his entire time to this service. The term "pastor" here is used in the relative sense only.

(a) The call of the pastor
(1) The call of a brother from the ministers of the church to the position as a pastor may well be undertaken after he has laboured in said church and by strength of his ability as worker, his love for the church, and by virtue of his faithfulness has gained the confidence of the church. This constitutes a desirable basis for the selection of a pastor. The principles governing such an appointment are the same as suggested in the appointment of a church leader. (See "Church Leader," par. C).

(2) Where a church, after a prayerful seeking for the will of God, finds that she has no brother in her fellowship who can meet the responsibility as leader and pastor, the following policies of procedure are suggested:

(a) The church, after fasting and praying seeking for the guidance of the Lord, charges the Church Council to select an appropriate candidate to fill the position. This selection should be done with the consulting benefits of the Committee of Reference and Counsel of the respective district. (A pulpit committee in the conference specifically charged with the responsibility of assisting the churches in finding a pastor, may be even preferable). The members of the church who feel an inward leading of the Lord as to a possible candidate, inform the church council of such impression of their own heart. No personal relationship of friendship or family ties are to enter into the consideration because of its subjective influence which obstructs the finding of God's will in the matter.

(b) The church council, with the praying support of the church, seeks a unifying leading of the Spirit toward a candidate for such a post.

(c) Having come to an inward agreement as to the candidate, the council must carefully investigate the suitability of such a brother. The following principles must be very definitely established:

(1) Is the brother a deeply spiritual person besides his abilities as a preacher and leader? (2) Is he faithful and consistent in his loyalty to the M.B. Church in faith, doctrine, and church policy? (3) Has he proven himself as a pastor in practical experience and what is his recommendation from his former fields of service? (4) Secure the confirmation of the Committee of Reference and Counsel as to the spirituality, doctrinal soundness, and denominational loyalty in the form of a written recommendation based on definite evidences that confirm such qualities. (5) The next question to weigh is whether the brother is suitable for the particular needs of the local circumstances.

(d) After the preceding principles have been established as positive, the church council inquires whether the respective brother is available for the candidacy. Only with the consent of the respective brother should his candidacy be presented to the church.

(e) At no time should a church consider several candidates at the same time and offer to the church a choice of preference by a majority of votes. Such procedure carries destructive influences which endanger the church's ability to recognize the leading of God in such important decisions.

(f) The church having received the announcement from their chm council as to the candidate they have selected under the guidance God, sets aside a period for fasting
and prayer, after which the voice the church is expressed in the form of a secret ballot. A two-thirds majority shall be considered a minimum requirement for appointment for leadership.

(g) A brother, who is not a member of our Conference, cannot be considered for the candidacy for a Pastorate in a church of the M.B. Conference, except the following steps are observed:

1. The church considering such candidacy must first apply to the Committee of Reference and Counsel and secure their endorsement of the candidate.

2. The Committee of Reference and Counsel calls such prospective candidate for the purpose of a personal interview and examination with special emphasis upon his past record of service in circles where he ministered before. Where the respective committee finds such a brother honestly sincere, with a testimony of life without reproach, sound in doctrine and in full agreement with the policies and practices of the M.B. Church, it may recommend the consideration of his candidacy to the respective local church.

(h) In case such a brother is called to the church, his ordination as a minister of the M.B. Church is not considered till he has proven himself true to the testimony he has offered. This period of probation may last from one to three years, as circumstances may demand. The approval of the Conference, based on the recommendation of the Committee of Reference and Counsel and the request of the respective local church whom the brother serves, for such ordination authorizes the confirmation of the brother through ordination. The principles governing ordination are those adopted by the General Conference i.e., 1948. (Yearbook, 1948, pp. 106, 107).

(b) Time of service for a pastor. Principles as to the time of service stated under "Church Leader" also apply to the time of service of the pastor. After some time of service in the church, a period which may be one or two years, where the pastor and the church have been convinced that they understand the Lord in the leading of the church and the brother, a severing of established relationship should be considered only if definite reasons exist as they are outlined in the paragraph "Change of Church Leadership and Pastors." The annual election method, borrowed by many churches from the procedures from civil government and organizations, rob the cause of Christ of the important consciousness that God calls his servants and gives teachers to the churches. It is also a destructive principle to real spiritual growth in the church. Occasional changes may become necessary but must be governed by Scriptural motives and Biblical procedures. However, both, the pastor and the church, should be at principles governing are outlined in the liberty to consider the advisability of severing their relationship, should circumstances warrant such a consideration.

(c) Compensation of the pastor. The principle of supplying for a pastor the means of livelihood is Scriptural. Its teaching leaves no room for diversified opinion; Gal. 6:6, 1 Cor. 9:7-13, state this responsibility of the church clearly. The important emphasis of these Scriptures is to exhort the church to meet such obligation gladly, and to advise the pastor not to make financial demands which in any way condition his service. The church should agree upon a definite value to be paid to their minister. Such remuneration to be paid from a church treasury maintained by contributions from the members of the church.
Where the Lord leads individual brethren and sisters in the church to offer financial assistance to their pastor above the designated salary to meet special circumstances of need, it is suggested that such gifts be channeled to the pastor through avenues which leave the name of the benefactor unknown to the pastor. This precautionary measure is suggested in order to safe-guard the impartiality of the pastor and church leader in his relationship towards the flock (Mel. 2:9; 1 Tim. 5: 20-21; Jas. 2:1-9; 3: 17). Our pastors we would desire to exhort to follow the example of Samuel (1 Sam. 12:2-5) who would not receive any gifts that his eyes be not blinded. Unto pastors who claim a strength of impartiality which cannot be influenced by personal gifts from the members of the church we call to consider the word of Paul "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." 1 Cor. 10:12. Partiality is a sin which may enter into our lives without us being conscious of it.

1951 -- (4) Change of church leadership and pastors

The necessity for occasional changes in the leadership of a church or in the pastoral service of a church is well recognized. The important principle in the matter is to find the Lord's will as to the right time and by what procedures such changes can be an honor unto the Lord. The following suggestions may prove of help:

(a) The guidance of God in the termination of a service in the church as pastor or leader is just as important as the assurance of His will in the appointment and to the acceptance of such office. The church as well as the respective brother must exercise much caution not to violate the providential leading of God. A mistake in such action may become the cause of great spiritual loss for the church as well as for the pastor.

(b) Changes effected upon the request of the pastor or leader:

(1) Fundamental principles that govern the finding of God's will must qualify every possible reason which may lead a pastor or leader to request his release from the responsibility of such important service. A definite call from the Lord to a different field of work, circumstances of health or conditions and needs in the family, an inward release of responsibility for the position through a growing conviction that his work in a particular church is done or whatever positive reasons there may arise. It is vitally important that such reasons be of positive character. It is very regretful where negative reasons, caused through improper relationship between minister and church, become the cause for a worker to want to withdraw. In such circumstances it is vital that the negative elements first be removed before any leaving of the field is considered

(2) Where a brother has come to the conclusion that God has released him from a field for definitely positive reasons, he should feel responsible to notify the church of the necessity of his leaving in the form of a letter. Such letter of resignation to be submitted to the church six months before such request shall take effect, or in accordance with the stipulation of the local church constitution.

(3) The church in a regular church assembly considers such a request from the leader or pastor seeking the Lord's will in the matter, and if she can understand the brother, to grant his request. Where a church as a body cannot find the liberty to release the brother, the latter should prayerfully and earnestly seek whether he has understood the Lord correctly, or whether His Master has some possible way by which He will enable him to continue his ministry to the flock.

(4) A church has the full right to express its will regarding the continuation or termination of a leader's or pastor's services. Nevertheless, the church is obliged to
proceed very cautiously in the formation of such an important decision. The desire of the church to benefit by the continued service of their brother will be an encouragement to continue in the work of his position.

(5) Where in the periodical expression of the church's attitude towards their leader and pastor, through a vote of approval or disapproval, there appears a negative expression, the pastor should submit himself to a thorough self-examination as to the causes of such attitude to discover whether they are of circumstantial or of personal nature and every effort should be made to remove such conditions.

(6) Where the percentage of negative expressions exceeds one-third of the church membership, the pastor should earnestly seek the face of God and counsel with other brethren in order to come to an objective conclusion whether it would be to the advantage of the church that he withdraw and assist to find a brother who may be more acceptable for the position. The welfare of the church in such cases must receive the primary consideration, and God will marvelously undertake for His servant who honestly seeks the welfare of God's flock and sacrifices his own preferences. Where the above outlined principles are not observed by a pastor brother, the church council should advise him to submit his resignation in order to effect a wholesome withdrawal and change in leadership. The help of the Committee of Reference and Counsel should be sought in such cases in order that they may serve as an impartial mediator between church and pastor. Every possible scripturally consistent means should be employed not to dismiss a leader or pastor by a hearty motion of the church be- cause of the high and sacred office which it concerns. A church must be kept mindful that a minister is a servant anointed of the Lord and cannot be dealt with like a hireling.

The question whether a retiring pastor should remain at his post until the successor has been found and appointed depends on the circumstances surrounding the withdrawal of the brother. The ideal and more desirable procedure is when the church needs not to be without a shepherd but that the leading brother can personally transfer the responsibility of this office to his successor. Whether this is possible or not should be agreed upon in consultation between the church council and the pastor and a recommendation presented to the church for adoption to cover the specific case concerned.

1951 -- (5) The discipline of the minister Satan, in his battle against the church, does his utmost to defeat the ministry. Every faithful leader and pastor is a special target for temptations and devilish attacks. Paul expresses this danger in the statement: "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." Strict self-discipline is a fundamental qualification for the ministry. The church must also recognize that their leader and ministers are always the first objects of Satan's attack and therefore surround them with prayer in their daily intercession.

Charges arising in the church against a minister are not to be dealt with as a charge against the membership of the church, but the following Scriptural principle must be observed: "Against an elder receive not an accusation but before two or three witnesses." 1 Tim. 5: 19. The word of one brother against an elder is not acceptable except the charge can be established on the strength of two or three witnesses, meaning those who actually know the wrong to have been committed.
Where an established charge can be laid against a minister, it is the advice that the church do not proceed with the discipline of such a servant but that the matter be referred to the Committee of Reference and Counsel who then have the liberty to investigate the case of the brother. Where the charges are found true, the Committee will suggest a Scriptural procedure to deal with the case of discipline of the servant of the Lord. It is a dangerous policy for a church to take the case of a minister's discipline into its own hands. Because it concerns the leadership, the church is frequently without the benefit of a strong and experienced guidance and much harm has been caused to the church itself as well as much injustice has been committed. A minister brother is also entitled to the evaluation of his wrong in act or attitude by brethren of his equal position and this privilege should not be taken from him.

1951-- (6) Discipline of a church for unscriptural relationships and actions against a minister

A church which refuses to follow the outlined procedure in dealing with wrongs committed by ministers and pastors, but chooses to take these matters into their own hands, becomes responsible to God and to the Conference for such procedures. The minister has a right of appeal to the Conference through the Committee of Reference and Counsel. Named Committee has the privilege and right to investigate such matters and bring a report and recommendation to the Conference. (Article VIII, Sec. 1, paragraph d).

We pray there may never be an occasion which would necessitate such action. Rather let us follow the Scriptural injunction of Eph. 4:3, "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." GCY, 1951, pp. 133-144.

1951 -- C. Suggested efforts towards unification of our churches in Scriptural administration and policies of ethical and spiritual standards of life and practice. (1) That the Minister's Manual under preparation by order of the General Conference (1943 session) be enlarged to serve as a guide book containing all aspects pertaining to the spiritual administration of the Mennonite Brethren Church as well as an exhaustive treatise on the Scriptural standards for life and practice in the church, closely documented by Scriptural reference. (2) That the Manual further contain all Conference resolutions related to the above mentioned principles to supplement the documentation of expressed principles. (3) That the manuscript for the manual, prepared in cooperation with various brethren from the Conference, be examined by the Committee of Reference and Counsel and, after adoption by this body, be printed for distribution in the churches to serve as a guide book to ministers and church workers. GCY, 1951, p. 143.

EDUCATION

1884 -- School issue

That we approve the beginning of the school issue, and ... endorse the (formed) school association, wishing it God's blessing. GCY, 1884, p. 26.

1898 -- Bible school

That the Missions-Committee look about for teaching personnel in order that the Conference may start its own Bible school. GCY, 1898, p. 208.

1898 -- McPherson College

That the offer by McPherson College to grant us free use of several class rooms and complete charge of the German department be tabled for the time being. GCY, 1896, p. 209.
1899 -- McPherson College offer accepted
That we receive free-will offerings in all of
our churches to raise the $400.00 (per year)
salary support of the teacher, J. F. Duerksen,
instructing in and in charge of the German
department at McPherson College. GCY,
1899, p. 216.

1908 -- Tabor College School Association
(That) by a show of hands the Conference
delegation voted to wish the brethren of the
Tabor College School Association the
Lord's blessings in their undertaking, and
assured them the confidence of the churches.
GCY, 1908, p. 396.

1915 -- Tabor College theology department
That in regard to the Conference assuming
the responsibility for the Theological
department of Tabor College, and to provide
a teacher for the same, it was decided to
elect a committee with authorization to
take the initial steps to carry out this
provision. (A committee of five brethren
was elected). GCY, 1915, p. 465.

1919 -- Conference advisory committee for
Tabor College
(After a discussion from the floor pointing
out the necessity and value of a Conference
school), it was decided to elect a committee
of the Conference to serve in an advisory
and supervisory capacity to the board of
directors and faculty of Tabor College. (A
committee of five was elected). GCY, 1919,
p. 494.

1924 -- Conference jubilee festival and fund
That the Conference recommends (a) That
the churches commemorate the founding of
the Conference of the Mennonite Brethren
Church of North America by way of a 50th
Jubilee Festival in 1928, and gather a fund
of $100,000 before the next General M.B.
Conference meets, to benefit our youth
(spiritually and educationally), (b) That
the Conference elect a committee of nine
members in which every district (Northern,
Southern, Central, Western) be represented,
with the following assignment: (1) To carry
out the assignment made in 1921 (GCY,
1921,p. 36) under "school concern" "to
observe a 'school day' on which the churches
remember Tabor College by prayer and
gifts." (2) To implement the resolution
regarding the observance of the
Conference 50th jubilee celebration. GCY,
1924, p. 61.

1927 -- The $3.15 levy for Tabor College
That in all of our churches an annual levy of
$3.15 per member be raised for the next
three years, and that members in the
churches who are better situated financially
make up for those less able (to
contribute), and that during the following
Conference interim preliminary work
be done in our churches with a view of
accepting Tabor College as a Conference
school at the next Conference (session). (in

1927 -- Jubilee fund and its distribution
That the churches (a) pursue energetically
the gathering of the jubilee fund and to send
all moneys collected to the treasurer of
the Jubilee Fund Committee in order to
establish the Jubilee Fund for the benefit of
our youth. (b) That one half of what is
gathered be turned over to Tabor College,
and that determination of where to apply the
other half be left to the individual churches.
GCY, 1927, p. 48.

1930 -- Conference school committee and
support of Tabor College
That the Conference adopt the resolutions
presented by the school committee of four
members which had been elected by the four
district conferences: (and that)
(a) The Conference recognizes the great
importance of the school (T.C.) in general
and also particularly for the churches, and
thanks for the educational ministry of the
school, and for the insight given into
the work.
(b) The Conference values the offer on the
part of the Tabor College Corporation to
transfer itself unconditionally to the
Conference. The Conference, however, is compelled to report that at the time there is not sufficient general sentiment in the churches in favor of accepting the school; but it is willing to pledge its support to the school during the next Conference interim with a contribution of $10,000 per year.

(c) This promised annual contribution is to be gathered through monthly offerings in all churches of the Conference, and if need be through special offerings. If during any year the established goal is not attained through offerings, the Conference appropriates the missing amount from other treasuries, towards which first of all, surpluses from the earnings of the Publishing House may be utilized.

(d) In order to carry out the above resolutions, the Conference elects a committee of four brethren, one from each district, and requests the directors of Tabor College to grant these brethren full co-worker status in the work for Tabor College.

(e) The committee organizes itself, with a chairman, secretary and treasurer. All funds (from the churches) are to be sent to the treasurer of this committee, who in turn transmits them from time to time to the treasurer of Tabor College.

(f) It is the further duty of the committee to serve in this important educational ministry in the spirit of the Conference, for which purpose it should visit the school at least once a year, and if possible, at the time when the main business of the school directors is being transacted. Traveling expenses are to be defrayed from this treasury.

(g) This is not a final or permanent arrangement. The Conference desires thereby to safeguard the continuation of the school. It also hopes to gain additional insight through this collaboration, which will enable it to formulate ensuing decisions that could lead to a full acceptance of the school.

(In the discussion great enthusiasm was shown in favor of the above resolutions. The Tabor College Alumni Association also pledged to supply another 110,000 per year towards support of the school. The same school committee, J. J. Wiebe, H. S. Voth, R. C. Seibel, K. G. Neufeld, was reelected to be the Conference school committee, and asked to represent the Conference on the Board of Directors of Tabor College). GCY, 1930, pp. 52, 53.

1933 -- Tabor College transferred to the General M.B. Conference

(a) The Board of Directors of the Tabor College Corporation presented its official resolution to the Conference as follows: "Decided, to earnestly request the Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church, and the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Conference, to accept Tabor College as its conference school."

(b) The Conference decided to call a special meeting of the delegates and all friends of education for Tuesday evening, October 24, 1933, to give due consideration to the above offer from the Tabor College Corporation.

(c) After a lengthy discussion of the school issue, the Conference elected a special committee of nine brethren (two from the northern, two from the central, two from the Pacific, and three from the southern districts) to work out a plan on the basis of which the school could be accepted by the Conference.

(d) After the special committee submitted its report and plan on the next day (Oct. 25, 1933), the Conference instructed the delegates to take the plan of accepting Tabor College to their home churches for consideration. To the churches not represented by delegates, the matter was to be presented in writing. The Conference also
decided to publish the plan proposing the acceptance of the school in the Zionsbote and in pamphlet form in order to acquaint everyone with the issue to be decided. The proposed plan provided that if two-thirds (2/3) of the entire number of votes in the churches at large were cast in favor, Tabor College would thereby be accepted as a Conference school. The results of the voting in each church were to be sent to the chairman or the secretary of the new Conference Board of Directors of Tabor College to be elected at this Conference. Tabor College School Plan adopted by the 1933 Conference delegation subject to a 2/3 majority ratification by the churches of the Conference.

I. Why we are in need of a Conference school
(a) To offer your youth who are eager to learn a place where they can acquire an education based upon the fundamentals of the Mennonite Brethren Church.
(b) To protect our youth from the dangers of anti-Christian influences that prevail at many schools.
(c) To train our youth on Biblical bases for service in the churches, and also for service in the public schools as teachers, and as Bible teachers in related schools.
(d) To safeguard the unity in the spiritual endeavors of our Conference.
(e) To preserve and cultivate the educational interest within our Brotherhood.
(f) To offer a higher education in learned subjects from the Christian point of view.
(g) To implement the educational endeavors (envisaged and begun) by our fathers.

II. The significance of the school for the Brotherhood
The past history of Tabor College demonstrates what blessing the Brotherhood derives from a Conference school, as was expressed at the previous General Conference held in the year 1930. Page 51 of the (1930) Yearbook states: "In the past 22 years, 5212 persons have enrolled at Tabor College. Of these, 649 graduated from one of a number of courses.... A good number, really several hundred, here made the decision to live and work for the Lord. The avenues for valuable service by our students are numerous. Directly engaged in mission or church work are 40 missionaries, 57 evangelists and preachers, and many Sunday school workers. In addition there are (among the Alumni) 19 doctors, 46 nurses, some 400 elementary school teachers, 160 businessmen, many farmers, etc.

III. The acquisition of the school buildings
(a) The buildings of Tabor College being offered by the Tabor College School Association had a former value of $167,000 (The administration building $133,000 and the dormitory $34,000); the campus ground $15,000, the library $12,000, the instructional equipment $20,000. Total worth of the property $214,000.

Against this property there is a debt of $23,036.59. To this sum must be added $1,440 interest in arrears on the Mission Endowment Fund loan. This raises the debt to $24,476.59. Aside from this, the school needs to pay the interest on the "annuity contracts," which amounts to $800 annually.

Note--Summary of debt: Mortgage, $12,000; interest in arrears, 12,1Ci0; notes payable to the "aid society", 81,200; other notes payable $9,116.59; total, $24,476.59.
(b) The School Association is to regulate terms of payment with the creditors, in order that the Conference may have a clear view of the liabilities it is to assume.
(c) On the basis of the voluntary offer of the Tabor College School Association, the Conference accepts its movable and immovable property, and obligates itself to satisfy all existing claims against the school assets.
(d) The Conference allows the mortgage against the property to stand, as a well-secured loan, until the possibility or need arises to pay
(e) Since during the last three years the Conference did not find it possible under prevailing circumstances to provide the school with the $10,000 annual support that had been promised, as a consequence of which the school was unable to pay the interest on the loan from the mission endowment fund, the Conference (herewith) cancels the three years of interest in arrears. This reduces the debt by $2,160.
(f) In order to cover partially the loan from the "aid society" at Newton, Kansas, the Conference lifts an offering among the delegates and visitors at the forenoon session (of the Conference).
(g) The other notes payable the Conference pays in accordance with the agreed terms of payment, from the annual income of the school.

IV. The support of the school
(a) The administration of the school shall attempt to make the school, as far as possible, self supporting.
(b) The Conference makes no levy for the support of the school, but expects from the churches that they will consider it an important mission endeavor of the Brotherhood, and support it in proportion to their ability and according to the advantage they derive from the institution.
(c) The support is to consist of free-will contributions of the churches:
   (1) Of systematic monthly offerings;
   (2) Of special gifts from well-to-do brethren and sisters;
   (3) Of bequests from friends of the school;
   (4) Of products in kind donated by the surrounding churches.
(d) To awaken and raise the interest in the school, to benefit student solicitation and to increase the income, a traveling secretary shall be engaged, who visits the churches in the Southern and the Central (District) Conferences twice a year.

V. The nature of the school
(a) In character the school is a positively Christian institution of higher learning offering:
   (1) Elementary as well as higher Bible study;
   (2) General liberal arts training, as well as professional (technical) training within the bounds of the Mennonite Brethren Conference confession of faith.
(b) The curriculum includes:
   (1) An elementary and a higher Bible course;
   (2) The academy course;
   (3) The junior college course.
Note: The committee is of the opinion that the curriculum can be expanded according to possibilities.

VI. The budget of the school
(a) In order to offer the above curriculum, and meet the current payments on the assumed debt, it will require a minimum income of $3,000 from tuition, and between $5,000 and $10,000 support from the churches and other sources.
Note: The demands upon the churches will decrease in proportion to the increase of the income from tuition.

VII. The management of the school
(a) For the current year (1933-34) the school proceeds on its present basis without interruption. (However) The school committee newly elected by this Conference replaces the present (T.C.) Board of Directors. GCY, 1933, pp. 41, 44.

1933
(d) The Conference elected the following nine members to constitute the Conference Board of Directors of Tabor College: H·S· Voth and S. L. Hodel to represent the Northern; D. L. Schellenberg and A. A. Schroeter the Pacific; J. F. Thiessen and H. E. Wiens the Central; and P. R. Lange, H. D.
Wiebe and John W. Warkentin the Southern Districts, and instructed this new Board of Directors to implement the referendum of the school issue in the local churches in all districts, to tabulate the returns, and if a two-thirds majority resulted, to proceed immediately with the assumption, organization and operation of Tabor College as a Conference institution. (The new Board of Directors of Tabor College organized itself with P. R. Lange, chairman, H. D. Wiebe assistant chairman, and J. K. Warkentin, secretary.)

(f) The Conference also decided to continue in the churches with the monthly offerings for the support of Tabor College. GCY, 1933, pp. 35-44.

1934
(Notes: The newly elected Conference Board of Directors of Tabor College reported to the churches on March 19, 1934, that the acceptance of Tabor College as an M.B. Conference school had carried by the required two-thirds majority vote of the Conference church membership voting. See printed report to the churches regarding the work of the school committee with reference to Tabor College, March 19, 1934).

1936
(Note: With the adoption of the 1936 Conference constitution, the size of the school committee was reduced from nine to five members with each district represented by one member, except the Southern which was given two members since the school is located there. GCY, 1936, p. 51.) (The following Brethren were voted into the school committee membership: P. R. Lange, J. K. Warkentin, Southern District; H. E. Wiens, Central; J. G. Wiens, Northern; and D. L. Schellenberg, Pacific. GCY, 1936, p. 51).

1939 -- Status, support, and field secretary of Tabor College
(a) That no changes be undertaken (at this time) in the structural status of Tabor College, and that the Bible department, the Junior College, and the Academy be retained, but that expansion of the entire school program be continued.
(b) That the monthly offerings from the churches be strengthened so that the appropriated sum of $10,000 annually be on hand by September one of each year. GCY, 1939, p. 34.
(c) That the recommendation by the Southern District Conference be accepted, to have the Conference engage a field secretary to represent the various Conference activities (including Tabor College) when visiting the churches. GCY, 1939, pp. 34 and 55.

(d) That the interest in arrears on the loan from the endowment fund be canceled, and that the school not be required to pay interest (on the loan) in the future. GCY, 1949, p. 55.

1939 -- Statement of appreciation to Tabor College staff and administration
That the Conference convey the following statement of gratitude to the president and faculty of Tabor College: The General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America, in session at Corn, Oklahoma, would like to express herewith its most cordial gratitude to the administration and faculty of Tabor College for their sacrificial and unselfish service to our young people. This gratitude we desire to clothe not only in words, but also demonstrate by sending (the school) more students and contributions. GCY, 1939, p. 34.

1943 -- Tabor College to continue as a Conference school
That Tabor College continue as a Conference school in full accordance with the advice received from the Committee of Reference and Counsel which reads: "Die Schule so zu gestalten, dass sie nach allen Seiten einen klaren Ton gibt." GCY, 1943, p. 48.

1943 -- Vote of confidence
That we give the Board of Education and the administration of Tabor College our full vote of confidence in the light of the above recommendation as accepted by the Conference. GCY, 1943, p. 48.

1943 -- Churches to continue the monthly offerings
That the churches continue with the monthly offerings with renewed efforts to contribute $10,000 annually for its financial support. GCY, 1943, p. 48.

1943 -- Conference approval of the "1000 Friends Plan"
That the Conference approves the 1000 friends plan. Through this plan we find friends that will in a special way pray for Tabor College, speak a good word for Tabor College, and contribute (at least) $10 annually for its financial support. GCY, 1943, p. 48.

1943 -- Goodwill expressed towards Tabor College
That we express our good will towards Tabor College and pledge ourselves to pray for Tabor College sincerely and often during the coming years. GCY, 1943, p. 48.

1943 -- Expression of appreciation
That we as a Conference give Brother A. E. Janzen, former president of Tabor College, a vote of appreciation for every effort he has put forth in the interest of Tabor College, and that we want to continue to pray for him in his new enterprise. GCY, 1943, p. 48.

1943 -- Agreeing on the number of candidates
That the Conference accept nominations as follows (for the educational committee): For Canada, two candidates, for the Central and Pacific districts, each two candidates, and for the Southern district, four candidates. GCY, 1943, p. 49.

1943 -- Expression of appreciation to Committee on Education
That the Conference express thanks and, appreciation to the Conference Committee on Education for the diligent and faithful work in the interest of Tabor College. GCY, 1943, p. 49.

1945 -- Promoting Tabor College
That the General Conference continue to build Tabor College in all worthy respects and especially in the direction of meeting the standards of accrediting agencies so that these (young people) in our churches
and communities interested in an accredited higher education may have the opportunity to attain such under the auspices of our Conference. GCY, 1945, p. 52.

1945 -- Financial Support for Tabor College
That the General Conference allow an adequate annual budget for the support of the educational program at Tabor College and that the following sources of income provide the amount of the budget as indicated:

Institutional income, including tuition fees, etc. $35,000
Church offerings 25,000
Thousand friends 25,000
Undetermined 15,000
100,000

That the Southern and Central District Conferences furnish additional support toward the program of Tabor College to the extent to which the Northern District and the Pacific District Conferences furnish additional support for the Mennonite Brethren Bible College and the Pacific Bible Institute respectively. GCY, 1945, pp. 52, 53.

1945 -- Discontinuing Academy program
That the General Conference discontinue the support and control of the Academy program at Tabor College and leave the operation of the educational program on the secondary school level to local congregations and groups of congregations. GCY, 1945, p. 53.

1945 -- Enlargement of Educational Committee
That the (Conference) constitution, Article XV, Section 2, Educational Committee, be amended to read as follows: "The Educational Committee is composed of six members with representation from each of the district conferences. Three members to be elected every three years. (Term 6 years) GCY, 1945, p. 53.

1945 -- Pacific Bible Institute
That the Pacific Bible Institute be recognized by the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America, but that the administration and management remain under the jurisdiction of the Pacific District Conference. GCY, 1945, p. 57.

1945 -- Share in endowment fund
That (since) many members of the Pacific District Conference have contributed to the educational endowment fund and especially so since the opening of the Pacific Bible Institute, with the hope that in time this institution would be recognized by the General Conference ... that the institution share in the benefits from the (educational endowment) fund. GCY, 1945, p. 57.

1945 -- Coordination of the Conference educational program
That two representatives of the Pacific Bible Institute and two representatives of the Winnipeg Bible College meet at least once (a year) with the Tabor College Board for the purpose of drawing up plans for coordinating our conference educational program and present recommendations at the meeting of the next General Conference. GCY, 1945, p. 57.

1948 -- Jubilee Fund
Merger with Educational Fund.
(a) That the Jubilee Fund be merged with the (Gen. M. B.) conference Educational Fund. GCY, 1948, p. 59.
Corn Bible School.
(b) That the Corn, Oklahoma, Bible School be allowed $200 per year as its share of the annual dividend. GCY, 1948, p. 59.
(c) Distribution. That the annual dividend of the Educational Fund be distributed among the three conference-recognized schools on the following basis: Tabor College 60%; Pacific Bible Institute 20%; M. B. Bible College, Winnipeg, 20%. GCY, 1948, p. 59.
1948 -- Four-year college
That vigorous steps be undertaken in the building of the school in the direction of meeting the standards of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools for a four-year college. GCY, 1948, p. 75.

1948 -- Library
That immediate steps be taken in the direction of supplying the present need for library space by instructing the administration (a) to proceed in developing plans for additional library facilities, (b) to collect finances for the building of the Library Building Fund, and (c) begin with the construction of the library as soon as, in the opinion of the Board, acceptable plans have been produced and sufficient funds have been gathered. Attempts should be made to interest the Alumni Associations in assuming the responsibility for the providing of funds for this purpose. The field secretary likewise is instructed to accept special gifts for this fund. GCY, 1948, p. 75.

1948 -- Library amendment
That the Educational Committee first crystallize full plans for such building and determine the cost of such project. This plan and its cost are to be placed before the Committee of Reference and Counsel and the Board of Trustees who together with the Educational Committee determine the possibility and acceptance of the plan. GCY, 1948, p. 76.

1948 -- Seminary commission
(a) That the Conference elect a commission to consider and study the practical aspect of an M.B. seminary. It was further moved that we elect a commission for this purpose in the manner our constitution prescribes for electing other committees. (b) That we elect two members from each district and consider the incoming Conference chairman a member of this commission. (See also seminary) GCY, 1948, p. 76.

1948 -- Duplication of curriculum, degrees, solicitation
(a) That in order to reduce to a minimum duplication by operating a number of Conference schools, the Conference provide meetings from time to time, called by the chairman of the Board of Education, in which each school has a minimum representation of one board member and one faculty member, for the purpose of coordinating the educational effort within the Conference.
(b) That the expenses involved to make such meetings possible, b paid by the General Conference (treasury). Expenses incurred by additional representatives are to be borne by the individual school being so represented. GCY, 1948, p. 77.

1948 -- Educational committee
That the Educational Committee be composed of six members with representation from each of the district conferences. Three of the members are to be elected for a term of six years at each regular convention of the Conference. GCY, 1948, p. 78.

1948 -- Liquidation of Tabor College note
due the Board of Foreign Missions
That since the principal of the old note given by Tabor College to the Board of Foreign Missions (for a loan) no longer bears interest, the amount be written off from the books of the treasurer of the Board of Trustees, and that in consideration of the liquidation of this debt, Tabor College from year to year remit 50% of the tuition of the missionary children of parents of our Conference who may be students at Tabor College, and admit such children of missionary parents in our Conference as students at half tuition. GCY, 1948, p. 60.

1951 -- Efforts towards accreditation of Tabor College
That we thank our heavenly Father for the achievements recorded in our efforts toward accreditation, and that we continue to apply all the potentialities of the
Conference towards the achievement of a fully accredited four-year college. GCY, 1951, p. 30.

1951 -- Building program
That since the Lord has permitted the destruction of our music hall by fire, and since the administration building is in urgent need of repair … the Educational Committee be granted the permission to solicit funds to meet such and other imperative needs. GCY, 1951, p. 30.

1951 -- Finances of Tabor College
(a) That we accept the following yearly budget for the operation of the school for the next interim of the Conference:

- Instruction $64,870
- Library 3,800
- Plant operation and maint. 13,740
- Investments 3,980
- Administration (Including debt retirement) 53,610

Total $140,000

(b) That we allocate the burden for the income of such a budget, each group receiving such an allocation, making itself responsible for the income of the same:

Budget -- $140,000

- Institutional income $70,000
- Non-institutional income* 70,000

Total $140,000

*Non-institutional income to be derived from:
- Conference Educational
  - Endowment Fund $2,500
  - Hillsbоро main street 5,000
  - Faculty 2,500
  - Special gifts 8,500
  - Southern District Conf. 24,000
  - Central District Conf. 7,800
  - Pacific District Conf. 11,000
  - Northern District Conf. 6,000
  - K.M.B. Conference 2,700

Total $70,000

1951 -- Administration of Tabor College
(a) That we express a sincere vote of appreciation for the services rendered by Dr. P. E. Schellenberg during the past ten years and give God the glory for any progress and blessings which the school has enjoyed. (b) That we extend a full vote of confidence to Brother John N. C. Hiebert, to assume the responsibilities of the office of the president of Tabor College, beginning September 1, 1951, with an interim arrangement until the earliest possible return of Brother Hiebert (from India). GCY, 1951, p. 31.

1951 -- Co-ordination of schools within the Conference
That we continue to seek the best possible co-ordination between the schools now in operation and continue to foster a spirit of understanding and cooperation. GCY, 1951, p. 31.

1951 -- Coordinating committee
That the heads of each school plus the chairman of each board serve as a coordinating study and steering committee ...and that a meeting of them be called no later than the fall of 1951. GCY, 1951, p-101.

1951 -- Tuition at Tabor College
That tuition ...be raised ...to $125.00 per semester ...and that students enrolled in Theology be allowed a discount of 50% on tuition. GCY, 1951, p. 31.

1951 -- Churches to raise their quota
That we encourage the churches to proceed diligently to raise their allotted quotas (so) that a deficit (in operations) need not occur again. GCY, 1951, p. 100.

1954 -- Unification of M.B. Conference Educational Program
That the recommendation of the Board of Education of Tabor College be accepted:
(a) Gratitude to God. That we offer unto God a special prayer of gratitude for His keeping power manifested within the school
and for the continued blessings which have been evident in this work. GCY, 1954, p. 58 and 61.

(b) To John N. C. Hiebert. That we extend a vote of gratitude to our Brother and Sister J. N. C. Hiebert for their willingness to come and do all in their power in behalf of Christian education within our Conference and particularly for Tabor College, and may we also assure them of our continued prayerful remembrance. GCY, 1954, pp. 58 and 61.

(c) To L. J. Franz. That we extend a vote of gratitude to our Brother, Dr. L. J. Franz, for his willingness to be the man who would stand in the gap in times of great need and administer the affairs of our school in the spirit of sacrifice and devotion during the interim periods which have occurred. GCY, 1954, pp. 58 and 61.

(d) To F. C. Peters. That we extend to our new president, Brother Frank C. Peters, a vote of confidence and assure him of our prayerful support in the great task of leading our Conference school in the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ. GCY, 1954, pp. 58 and 61.

(e) To the Tabor College staff. That the Conference also extend a vote of deep appreciation to the entire staff of Tabor College and send them a special word of encouragement in the task which they are performing in our behalf, assuring them of our prayerful support. GCY, 1954, pp. 58 and 61.


(g) Unified educational program. That the General Conference establish a unified educational program by which one board shall operate the schools of the Conference from one treasury, into which all contributions shall flow, and from which the schools shall be subsidized according to a previously accepted budget. GCY, 1954, pp. 59 and 61.

Note: At this point Brother J. A. Toews, chairman of the Canadian M.B. Conference, presented a statement of clarification, read by Brother C. J. Rempel, secretary, in behalf of the Canadian Conference, as follows:

(a) That the Canadian delegation abstains from the discussion of the unification issue and that the matter be regulated as an area issue.

(b) That Canada through its delegation has consented to voluntary participation in the spiritual, moral and financial support of the General (M.B.) Conference educational program subject to a further review at the next Canadian Conference.

(c) That after the completion of the organizational pattern of the General Conference school program as effected by the USA area, provisional agreement be reached in areas which may affect the USA or Canadian area. GCY, 1954, p. 62.

(h) Size of new board. Taking the Canadian Conference position into consideration. That the board which shall govern the unified educational program shall consist of thirteen members with the districts represented in the following manner: Pacific District, four; Southern District, four; Central District, two; Canadian District, one; K.M.B. Conference, one; and one member at large. GCY, 1954, pp. 59 and 62.

(i) Location of our four-year Liberal Arts College. This issue (Recommendation No. 9), even after several attempts and amendments, failed to pass. GCY, 1954, pp. 59, 63, 137.

(j) Budget. That the new Board of Education be authorized to draw up a budget for the operation of a unified system and put it into effect with the consent of the Committee of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1954, pp. 59, 63.
(k) Allocation. That we continue the principle of allocating portions of the budget to the various districts, except for Canada, to whom it be left to make contributions on a voluntary basis. GCY, 1954, pp. 59, 63.

(1) Building program. That the new Board be authorized to work progressively on a building program as it may be necessary to put our unified educational system into operation. GCY, 1954, pp. 59, 63.

(m) M.B. Bible College. That we continue to recognize the Mennonite Brethren Bible College in Winnipeg as heretofore. GCY, 1954, pp. 59, 63.

(n) Standards. That the Conference reaffirm the objectives and standards of conduct of our educational system as outlined in our Tabor College catalog (Objectives, pp. 12-13; Standards of Conduct, pp. 27-28, 1954) and assure the administration of our support in the implementation of the same. GCY, 1954, pp. 59, 63.

Note: The tabled issue, tabled motion No. 9, was now voted on again, and again failed to pass. Refer to (i) above. GCY, 1954, pp. 63, 137.

1954 -- Motion to proceed with election of new Board of Education
That because we have come to a point beyond which we do not at this time have sufficient light as to the further will of God in our program of education, we now table this recommendation (No. 9) until we receive further direction from God, and at this time proceed to elect the new board of education with instructions to direct our educational program under the leading of the Lord. They are charged to come to the churches of the Conference for help or advice. GCY, 1954, p. 137.

That we follow the usual principle of electing those from each area on the basis of one half having the highest for six years, the other half for three years, and the brother for Canada for three years. GCY, 1954, p. 137. 1954 -- Vote of thanks to former board of education
That we give the nine brethren of the former Board of Education a standing vote of thanks for their faithful service. The whole Conference (delegation and guests) stood. GCY, 1954, p. 137.

1954 -- Retiring board asked to aid if called on
That the retiring board members be willing to stand by whenever called upon. GCY, 1954, p. 138.

1957 -- Gratitude, prayer and provisional program for Christian education
(a) That we as a Conference thank God for the privilege we enjoy to build our institutions and train our youth in the admonition and fear of the Lord and in keeping with our confession of faith. (b) That we as a Conference pledge ourselves anew to pray more, even than heretofore, for the program of Christian education especially during this time of reorganization. (c) That the Conference send warm greetings and an appropriate word of encouragement to the faculty of Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary (Fresno), Tabor College, (Hillsboro), Mennonite Brethren Bible College (Winnipeg), and Pacific Bible Institute and Junior College (Fresno).

(d) That until the commission to be established at this Conference for the purpose of defining the North and South relationship has completed its assignment relative to education, we continue to operate our institutions as at present. GCY, 1957, pp. 85, 86.

1957 -- Transfer of assets from the Conference to Tabor College Corporation
That the Conference instruct its Board of Trustees to transfer the physical assets of Tabor to the Tabor College Corporation. GCY, 1957, pp. 85, 86.

1957 -- Statement of greetings to M.B. Conference schools
That, the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North
America in session at Yarrow, B.C., Canada, at its 47th convention extends warm Christian greetings to Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Tabor College, Mennonite Brethren Bible College, Pacific Bible Institute and Junior College as an expression of sincere appreciation for their faithful ministry in Christian higher education.

Acknowledgement (is) given and emphasis (is) made upon the vital role our institutions of learning are playing in supplying qualified, dedicated workers called of God to the various fields of ministry entrusted to our brotherhood. Appreciation (is) expressed for the positive Christian influence our schools are exerting on the young people of our churches who enter secular fields of endeavor.

May God continue to direct and prosper your efforts as you "... earnestly contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3b). "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoving, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).

The Conference (through the resolutions committee, John E. Friesen, John Pankratz, Isaac Tiessen). GCY, 1957, p. 120.

1960 -- Tabor College U.S. area school
The General Conference Board of Reference and Counsel interprets the action taken by the General Conference in session at Yarrow B.C., in October, 1957, and recorded on pages 85 and 86 of the Conference Year Rook, as constituting Tabor College as a United States area school. GCY, 1960, p. 150.

1960 -- Transfer of U.S. Educational Endowment Fund to the Board of Education of the U.S. Area
That in view of the action taken by the General Conference at this session concerning the activity and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees in connection with the solicitation and handling of permanent funds, that is, to discontinue activity in the educational endowment field; and in order to make possible the fullest use of all available resources for support of the educational program such as accreditation and financing of future buildings; and to continue the delineation and assignment of specific areas of responsibility to the various Boards; be it resolved: That the Board of Trustees of the General Conference be authorized and instructed to transfer to the U.S. Board of Education all U.S. educational endowment funds as soon as practical and that the U.S. Board of Education be made responsible for the gathering and the management of all permanent funds for educational purposes as well as the administration of the earnings of such funds. GCY, 1960, pp. 150, 151.

1960 -- Re: theological education on the seminary level
That should no unity tie achieved on this (seminary) question at the (1960) General Conference, then the Canadian Conference would ask the General Conference to withdraw the decision reached at Yarrow, B.C. in 1957 (regarding postponement of expansion), which affected both area conferences. GCY, 1957, p. 12, item 3. However, we urge that the institutions in both area conferences be careful in their extension work, so that the cause of establishing a General Conference seminary be not hindered. Should the Lord lead the General Conference in the future to establish a seminary satisfactory to the entire General Conference, the Canadian Conference would be pleased. GCY, 1960, p. 151.

1960 -- The Seminary resolution as presented by the Board of Reference and Counsel
That in view of the instructions of the General Conference in session at Yarrow in 1957 to continue to study the matter of
unification in the area of higher theological training and in view of the questions from the Canadian Conference and recommendation from the United States Conference while the respective conferences were in session in 1960, and in view of the assignment of the General Conference and the Committee of Reference and Counsel ... the following (be adopted): (a) That the felt need for and desirability of a unified area seminary program as expressed by the U.S. and Canadian Conferences calls for the adoption of a definite statement to that effect from the General Conference, thus placing further responsibility upon the entire brotherhood. (b) That the rapid growth of indigenous churches on other continents and their organization into conferences requires that their present and future needs for trained leadership must of necessity lead to their inclusion in our planning for a unified seminary program. (c) That the different degrees of readiness for the implementation of such program make it advisable to postpone final action on this issue at this time, and that in the meantime the theological training of our youth be continued on an area basis. (d) That the General Conference instruct the Board of Reference and Counsel to appoint a study commission of three members to carry out a research project on all areas pertaining to the founding and operating of a Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary on an international basis. (e) That the findings of this study commission be reported to the United States and Canadian Conferences in session in 1961. GCY, 1960, pp. 151, 152.

1963 -- Seminary Commission report accepted
(a) That our Conference recognize the need for an adequate seminary training program in our brotherhood. (b) That because of the differing degrees of readiness of our area conferences to assume the responsibility for such a program of higher theological training in the establishment of a united seminary for the entire brotherhood, this need for the present be met by our existing schools on area level with an openness for the Lord's direction toward a unified seminary program in the future. (c) That the Conference, for the immediate present, encourage the provision of periodic study conferences in the form of seminars for the benefit of the faculties of our theological schools and other leading brethren from our constituencies for the purpose of spiritual fellowship and theological studies to strengthen our unity in faith and doctrine. (d) That a committee of three, one member appointed from the Board of Reference and Counsel and one member from each of our area conference theological schools, be charged with the responsibility for the implementation of such study conferences. (e) That the Board of Reference and Counsel of the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches be charged to carefully watch any future developments which may indicate that further consideration toward unification of our seminary training programs would be profitable and initiate such consideration at the opportune time. GCY, 1963, pp. 37, 38.

1963 -- Educational Endowment Fund distribution to Canadian Conference and U.S. Conference
(That the) resolution (regarding the) disposition of the Educational Endowment Fund (arrived at by) the Board of Trustees and the Board of Reference and Counsel in combined session, motivated by a spirit of unity and understanding (be) accepted (viz.) that the balance of monies in the Education Fund, i.e., the sum of ~78,499.46, be allocated to the Canadian Conference and the U.S. Conference on the following basis: (a) $60,000.00 to be credited to a Canadian
Conference Trust Fund. (b) $18,499.46 to be credited to a U.S. Conference Trust Fund. GCY, 1963, p. 124.

ELDERS

1888 -- Reprimanding of elders
That in reply to the question, should an elder turn over the leadership to a minister when dealing about his own case, or rather call in another elder: Decided that an elder should make amends for his errors like any other brother. However, if an elder is molested with accusations, and entanglements result there from, then another elder should be called in to examine the accusations and see whether they merit consideration, or to judge whether the revolting brethren are to be reprimanded according to 1 Tim. 5:19, 20. GCY, 1888, p. 70.

1951 -- Board of Elders
That the recommendation presented by the Committee of Reference and Counsel to create a "Board of Elders" be referred by the Conference to the churches of the districts and provinces for study and consideration. GCY, 1951, pp. 130-133.

1954 -- Board of Elders (proposed)
That in view of the reaction of all the District Conferences to Document No. 3, "Board of Elders" as presented by the Committee of Reference and Counsel, (Gen. Conference Yearbook, 1951, pp. 130-133) ... the Conference ordered a revision of said document transferring the duties assigned in the document to the Board of Elders to the Committee of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1954, p. 20.

ELECTIONS, CONFERENCE

1954 -- Election of candidates
That each district may make its own nominations with the understanding that additional nominations and the (candidates for) members at large be made from the floor. GCY, 1954, pp. 33, 34.

1963 -- Nomination procedure
That the U.S. and Canadian Conferences serve as a nominating committee and present two nominees for every vacancy in their particular area, Conference officers and members at large excepted. GCY, 1963, p. 41.

EVANGELISTS

1879 -- Conference evangelist
That the Conference favors the engagement of a Conference evangelist; votes to begin a fund for evangelization at home and in foreign missions; designates the offering taken at the festival meal to be the initial contribution to the evangelization fund: and chooses Elder Abraham Schellenberg to be Conference evangelist to serve the churches in Kansas, Nebraska, Dakota, and Minnesota. GCY, 1879, p. 3.

1883 -- Traveling evangelists
That some traveling evangelists be appointed for the Dakotas, Minnesota, and Manitoba. The remuneration to be $30.00 per month. These evangelists are to publish their reports in a small church paper to be established for this purpose. GCY, 1883, p. 8-12.

1884 -- Full-time paid evangelists
That the Conference is of the opinion that a monthly evangelization service is not adequate. Resolved, to appropriate from the Conference treasury a $400 annual salary, and to engage the evangelists for the entire year. (A local church may pay part of the salary if a major part of the work is done there.) GCY, 1884, p. 23.

1945 -- Evangelists at large
That the General Conference is happy when God gives her brethren whom He has set to be evangelists and who, trusting in God, give their full time to evangelization. But, the placing of such brethren is a matter of
the local church or of the district conference and not of the General Conference. GCY, 1945, p. 71.

EXCOMMUNICATION

1878 -- Relation to excommunicated members
That in case a brother is excommunicated according to I Cor. 5: 11, even the wife should have nothing to do with him. This, however, has no reference to material eating or to marital relations. GCY, 1878.

1880 -- Excommunication of members
That in case a brother leaves the church and lives in sin, he is considered excommunicated. If the brother withdraws because of serious conditions within the church, these should be investigated and removed so that proper relationship may be reestablished. GCY, 1880, p. 8.

1881 -- Excommunication of members
That it be decided to excommunicate chiefly for the purpose of leading the brother to conviction and repentance. Each case should be handled carefully and individually so as to win the brother for Christ and the church. GCY, 1881, p. 12.

1885 -- Withdrawal from excommunicated members
That relative to excommunication it was advised to abide by the Conference resolution of 1881, and that we withdraw from such persons only as directed by the Word of God. GCY, 1885, p. 36.

1895 -- Relation to excommunicated members
That it be decided to abide by a former (1878) Conference resolution which states that it is not to be understood that we should have nothing to do with these, nor eat with them, except in Christian fellowship such as the eating before the Lord's Supper and church fellowship. GCY, 1895, p. 176.

1943 -- Excommunication for immorality (See immorality)

FASTING

1886 -- Easting endorsed
That the Conference unanimously endorses fasting preparatory to all important official actions such as ordinations of ministers and deacons, etc. GCY, 1886, p. 44.

GENERAL WELFARE, RELIEF, AND PUBLIC RELATIONS (See also MCC end Non-Resistance)

1884 -- The matter of relief brought to the Conference Floor
(The Conference took note that there was need for material aid among impoverished immigrants in Russia desiring to migrate to America; also of the recommendation that relief be made a matter of the entire Conference. But action in this respect was left to the individual churches.) GCY, 1884, p. 26.

1894 -- Church aid to new settlements
That requests by newly settling groups asking aid for building churches be directed to their mother congregations within the Conference. GCY, 1894, p. 167.

1900 -- Dispensing of relief funds (That the Conference approve the following dispensed relief funds that were gathered as private gifts and special offerings): for famine in India, $3,120.50; Armenia, $127.78; miscellaneous needs, $16.00; for oppressed Christians, $392.44. GCY, 1900, pp. 224, 225.

1901 -- Relief offerings
That also during the year (1901) ... (the churches) gather (gifts) on Thanksgiving Day for oppressed children of God and send the offerings to J. F. Harms (then Missions treasurer), Medford, Oklahoma. GCY, 1901, p. 247.

1902 -- Offerings for relief
That again this year an offering for oppressed children of God be gathered and
sent to J. F. Harms, Medford, Oklahoma. GCY, 1902, p. 268.

1903 -- Offering for relief
That again an offering be gathered (in the churches) for oppressed children of God and forwarded as heretofore. GCY, 1903, p. 294.

1904 -- Offering for relief
That also in the future we gather funds on Thanksgiving Day for oppressed children of God and forward them to J. F. Harms (who in turn remits them to the needy). GCY, 1904, p. 319.

1905 -- Thanksgiving offering
(a) That because the 1904 relief offering is still in the treasury, since the need (for relief) abroad has decreased ... but since there are many impoverished people in America ... many of them in California, to send the 1904 Thanksgiving Day offering ($406.85) to the Brethren P. A. Dyck and P. Wohlgemuth, Los Angeles, to be distributed conscientiously among the poor Russians, and that these brethren report about it later in the Zionsbote. (b) To again gather a Thanksgiving offering (in 1905) and to designate one half of it for relief in India, and the other half for Christian literature for Russian people in America. GCY, 1905, pp. 339, 340.

1906-1920
Note: During the period from 1906 to 1920, with no areas of major distress existing, the Conference administered contributions for relief as part of the assignment of the Board of Missions. The Thanksgiving offerings were continued, but were directed more towards home missions in the cities, and towards the distribution of Christian literature.

1921 -- Relief funds for Russia's post-war distressed
That we (the Conference) recommend to our churches, through the respective delegates, to gather as many funds as possible for relief (material aid) in famine areas of Russia, and that these funds be sent to the Missions treasurer, J. W. Wiens, Hillsboro, who in turn will forward them to Russia through the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). The Conference delegation expresses the sentiment that the monthly offerings should amount to $1.00 or more per church member. GCY, 1921, pp. 49, 50.

1921 -- Aid for colonization
That we leave to the respective committee (MCC) the further development of the matter of colonizing refugee Mennonites from Russia, but that we actively assist the committee when aid for colonizing is appealed for. GCY, 1921, p. 50.

1924 -- Relief and Welfare committee established
That a committee of seven brethren be elected, which is to organize itself, and represent our Conference for a term of three years, in the (overall) general committee of Mennonites for relief and colonization. (The following were elected: P. C. Hiebert, H. H. Flaming, J. W. Wiens, Southern; P. H. Balzer, Central; H. A. Neufeld, John B. Dyck, Northern; and D. C. Eitzen, Pacific districts.) GCY, 1924, p. 60.

1924 -- Assignment to Public Relations committee
That the report (on non-resistance) be gratefully received and that the (public relations) committee (of three members) continue, and remain alert (on this matter) and carry on its work in order to be of assistance in case a need arises. GCY, 1924, p. 64.

Note: the public relations committee was merged with the General Welfare committee in 1966.

1927 -- First report by the Relief and General Welfare committee as such, and Conference resolution
That the report be accepted and that (a) Since the distress among the newly immigrated Mennonites in Canada will
apparently again be severe during the ensuing winter ... that all churches within the Conference be cordially called upon to continue active participation in the relief (material aid) for Canada, in that they again gather and implement shipments of clothing and sending of relief funds. (b) That all moneys and gifts be sent through a central (treasury) as much as possible, and that where this is not feasible, to forward them promptly to the (Relief and Welfare) committee. (c) That our brethren in Canada create a central (office) to which all needs as well as all receipts of contributions are reported, and that this central office in Canada regularly report to the Committee in the U.S.A. on the relief situation in every respect. (d) That the committee (of seven) be again charged with this service for another three years. GCY, 1927, pp. 60, 61.

1930 -- A word of gratitude to the President and people of Germany
(a) That the Conference forward a word of gratitude to the President and the people of Germany for the noble assistance extended to our brethren (Mennonites) (during the years of their migration from Europe to the western hemisphere) (b) That the material aid service be continued. (c) That in the future, we assume a somewhat larger share of contributions for the immigrated sick in Canada, in the U.S.A., and for the Mennonites who (for the time being) remained in Southampton. (d) To thank the committee for its service and to elect it for another three years. GCY, 1930, pp. 58, 59.

1933 -- Projection of our relief ministry
(a) That we continue to do good, and not grow weary (faint), for in due season we shall reap without end. (b) That we contemplate the breaking of the spiritual bread to our people in South America as soon as possible. (c) That a visit by a ministerial brother from our Conference would not only be very welcome, but would in various respects also bring about blessings. (d) That in the larger relief movements we continue to collaborate with the various other confessions of Mennonites. (e) That we do not grow slack in the earnest intercession in behalf of our suffering brethren in the faith who are still being persecuted and oppressed in Russia, or are still languishing in exile. (f) That we remind ourselves of the great need for clothing, especially in the British Northwest, where so many poor (of the household of faith) are now settling. (g) That we transmit greetings and our gratitude to Brother Benjamin II. Unruh and his fellow-workers for their exerting endeavors in the interests of our people. (h) That we as Conference send greetings to our people in Paraguay, Brazil, and Harbin (China). (i) That we cordially thank all workers in the various departments of relief work for their unselfish service. GCY, 1933, pp. 57, 58.

1936 -- General relief resolutions
(a) 1. That we thank our Heavenly Father for the numerous spiritual and temporal advantages that we enjoy so abundantly in the U.S.A. and Canada. 2. That we continue to remember the poor according to the example of the Apostles, cited in Gal. 2:10, "Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do." 3. That in the larger relief projects we continue to collaborate with the other confessions of Mennonites. 4. That our Conference declare itself willing to contribute its share towards the support of Brother B. H. Unruh, the general secretary of the international relief. 5. That
we cordially thank the aged Brother J. F. Harms for his faithful service in the forwarding of personal relief contributions to Russia, and that for the next three years we allow him a weekly pension of $5.00, to be paid equally from the relief treasury and the publishing house. GCY, 1936, p. 58.

1936 -- Reserve fund to be continued
That we continue to maintain a reserve fund of $5,000 to meet emergencies. GCY, 1936, p. 58.

1936 -- Acquisition of land for the Paraguay colony
That we approve MCC’s plan regarding the purchase of land for the Brethren in Paraguay. GCY, 1936, p. 58.

1936 -- Paraguay Visit
That the Conference implement the 1933 General Conference resolution as soon as practically feasible to bring the Brethren in Paraguay spiritual and temporal help, by sending to them a suitable brother. There are between 1,500 and 2,000 of our Brethren, who came of great tribulation, and have now lived for five years as pioneers under difficult circumstances. GCY, 1936, p. 59.

1936 -- Canada aid
That we recommend that all churches of the Conference gather a special offering during the month of January of 1937, for those of our household of faith in Canada, where the breadwinners have deceased or have become incapable through illness to pay their debts, or find themselves in other very critical circumstances. This is in compliance with a resolution of the world congress in Holland. GCY, 1936, p. 59.

1936 -- South America visit by P. C. Hiebert
(a) That the compensation and traveling costs for the visit of a brother to South America be covered by special gifts and offerings from the churches. (b) That the compensation for making the trip to South America be $150. Should the visit require over three months, the amount be increased in proportion. (c) That Brother P. C. Hiebert be asked to make the visit and to do this in 1937. GCY, 1936, p. 59.

1936 -- Relief offerings
(a) That in all churches of the Conference a monthly offering be gathered for relief. (b) That the brethren who have been assigned to collect relief funds in California, be asked to continue this service with aid of the (Conference) relief committee. (c) That the (relief) committee be reimbursed for their extra expenses. GCY, 1936, p. 59.

1936 -- Greeting to Mrs. Mumaw
That the Conference send greetings to the widow of Levi Mumaw, Scottdale, Pa., with Rom. 8:28 since Rev. Mumaw served many years and had done much in relief work before his decease. GCY, 1936, p. 60.

1936 -- Railroad passes
That the Conference express its appreciation to the railroads for their accommodation in regard to providing travel opportunities to the Conference, and in cases also granting passes to delegates and Conference workers. GCY, 1936, p. 60.

1939 -- Reaffirmation of our relief participation
(a) That, as heretofore, we continue to allow the Mennonite Board of Colonization $50.00 per month for the support of the sick and other suffering (people). (b) That we want to continue to assist by way of providing funds to cover uncollectible (immigrant) travel
debts. (c) That we desire to continue to participate in the work of MCC, and collaborate and share in dispatching representatives to Europe, who look for valid relief opportunities, and who initiate the necessary measures for material aid. (d) That we continue to contribute a modest share towards the support of Brother Benjamin H. Unruh, Germany, representing the Mennonites. (e) That we continue to share in the support of the needy in Brazil and Paraguay. (f) That we renew the 1936 Conference resolution to support Brother J. F. Harms in the amount of $5.00 weekly. (g) That we continue the monthly relief offerings in all churches. (h) That we retain the direct aid (personal gifts) to (people in distress in) Russia. GCY, 1939, p. 48.

1943 -- Gratitude as an historic peace church

(a) That we continue to support the work of relief in the various areas where want and suffering exist as the result of the war, irrespective of religion and race. (b) That we continue the monthly contribution of $50 towards the travel debt of Canadian immigrants that have no prospect of ever being able to pay themselves, plus 3 least one additional offering to assist our brethren in their special effort to clear debts. (c) That we continue the payment of a monthly pension gift to Rev. J. F. Harms, in the sum of $10.00. (d) That we continue to prepare and send clothing to the places where need and suffering is great. GCY, 1943, pp. 68, 69. (e) That we approve the action of several district conferences and of the Committee on General Welfare and Public Relations to employ a brother to give special care to the spiritual and material welfare of all our drafted men, and to assist our churches with counsel and aid when and where help is needed. GCY, 1943, p. 69.

1943 -- United relief participation

That we approve the effort of war sufferers relief by our committee as carried on in the past, and also the preparation for a worldwide relief action as soon as the war permits along the lines now planned by the Mennonite Central Committee. GCY, 1943, p. 67.

1943 -- Approval of M.C.C. endeavors

That we commend and approve the action of the Mennonite Central Committee for ever keeping in close touch with Selective Service and the government at Washington so as to act at all times fully in accord with orders, and avoiding anything in handling the Civilian Public Service work that does not have official sanction and approval. GCY, 1943, p. 67.

1943 -- Management of C.P.S. Camps

That we approve the management of our Civilian Public Service camps and also the several forms of detached service assignments such as rehabilitation work in mental hospitals, needed dairy farm work, the several health and rehabilitation projects in Florida and Puerto Rico, and also the continued aid lent to our brethren in South America. GCY, 1943, p. 68.

1943 -- Educational program in C.P.S. Camps

That we approve the educational program in our camps whose aim is to ground the young men in their faith, to teach them to live together in Christian charity with such as hold different views on many minor points, to learn various skills such as first aid, to develop stability of character, to encourage true piety and a useful life in the fear and service of God. GCY, 1943, p. 68.

1943 -- Spiritual nurture for drafted men

That we extend the arrangements made to provide spiritual nurture for all drafted men. This provision is to include all the men who are stationed in Mennonite camps or in detached service under Mennonite supervision. That special efforts
be made to reach the men of our household

That we continue the support of Civilian Public Service financially, in our prayers, and in personal visits of ministers. GCY, 1945, p. 40.

of faith, that is, members of the Mennonite Brethren Church, including those doing Civilian Public Service of national importance and also those who have been led to accept service under the military. GCY, 1943, p. 68.

1943 -- Contributions to camps and detached service
That our churches continue to contribute their share of the cost of operating the camps and caring for men in detached service ... which requires a contribution of a sum equal to that produced by a contribution of 50 cents per member per month.... GCY, 1943, p. 68.

1943 -- Provision for dependents, and prayer for strength to witness
That those of us who were permitted to remain at home acknowledge our Christian responsibility in behalf of those that had to follow the call away from their home and their dear ones: (a) by providing that none of the dependents of those in camps suffer want, (b) by praying in a special way for these young men who stand in the forefront as witnesses for the faith of our fathers. GCY, 1943, p. 68.

1943 -- Field man to look after welfare of drafted men, and counsel churches
1943 -- Pastors to send information about young men called from their churches
That each pastor send in all possible information about any young men who have been called from their church into the country's service. The committee (of general welfare) volunteers to furnish special information blanks. GCY, 1943, p. 69.

1943 -- Resolutions assuring our continued support

1943 -- South American assignment to A. E. Janzen
That we approve the sending of our Brother A. E. Janzen to South America (under MCC auspices) for the purpose of strengthening and helping the brethren spiritually, socially, educationally and materially. GCY, 1943, p. 68.

1943 -- Buying non-war bonds
That we make known to the world our peace attitude in the matter of finance in subscribing for the special non-war bonds now offered by the national government. GCY, 1943, p. 68.

1943 -- Citizen loyalty to our country
That we admonish one another to be true and loyal citizens of this our dear country and that we do everything that we can to help our country, materially, socially and spiritually as the Lord gives us strength and light.

1945 -- Continue relief work through MCC
That we continue to do relief work through MCC in the several areas of the world among all men, with emphasis on those of the "household of faith." GCY, 1945, pp. 39, 40.

1945 -- Aid to displaced Mennonites
That we pledge ourselves to support the movement to find a home for needy, displaced Mennonites from war-stricken areas of Europe. GCY, 1945, p. 40

1945 -- Spiritual ministry
That we as M.B. Conference feel it our obligation to break the Bread of Life as well as the natural bread to the Mennonites in war-stricken areas by sending an experienced and established brother to Europe for a period of six months or longer. GCY, 1945, p. 40.

1945 -- Civilian Public Service support
1945 -- Influence against peace-time conscription
That we ask our brethren of the Public Relations Committee, to lead us in exercising proper influence against peace-
time conscription of our young men, but that in case of its inevitable enactment, we favor asking for special provisions of service in a non-military capacity. GCY, 1945, p. 40.

That we continue our relief activities, including gifts of money, gifts in the form of canned food, gifts in the form of clothing, gifts in the form of praying, consecrated brethren and sisters as the Lord may lead. GCY, 1948, p. 67.

1945 -- Full-time brother to further relief and CPS
That we authorize the employment of a brother to devote his time and energy to furthering the various interests of relief and Civilian Public Service. GCY, 1945, p. 40.

1945 -- Thanks to the welfare committee
That we indicate our thankfulness to these brethren by a standing vote. (The delegation then rose to show its thanks and sang a stanza of the song "Halt mich treu.") GCY, 1945, p. 40.

1946 -- In favor of a leper colony
That we favor the setting up and administering of a leper colony in Paraguay, under the auspices of the MCC, as a token of recognition to that nation for the admission of our brethren when in need. GCY, 1945, p. 40.

1945 -- Institution for mentally ill
(See rehabilitation) GCY, 1945, p. 47.

1945 -- Aid to Bethesda
That the General Conference agree to grant "Bethesda" (mental) institution the sum of $500 to aid in its worthy undertaking. GCY, 1945, p. 41.

1945 -- Support to (CPS) camps
That our churches continue to contribute their share of the cost of operating the camps and for the men in detached service by a contribution of 50 cents per member per month. GCY, 1945, p. 41.

1945 -- Travel debt support
That we continue the monthly contribution of $50.00 toward the Canadian immigrant travel debt of persons that have no prospect of ever being able to pay themselves. GCY, 1945, p. 41.

1945 -- Observance of peace Sunday
That we continue to observe the Sunday before National Armistice Day as special peace Sunday. GCY, 1945, p. 41.

1945 -- Loans to men in Government service
That only the district conferences (not individuals) may borrow money for the rehabilitation of its returning servicemen from the Loan Treasury of the Board of Trustees of the General Conference and (that it) is security for it (the loan). The lending of the money to its returning servicemen is a matter of the district conference. GCY, 1945, p. 71.

1945 -- Prayer for all men in Government service
That the M.B. Conference at the session convening at Dinuba, California, from November 25 to 29, 1945, express to all young men in service from the families of our Conference, whether in the C. O. camps or in the active service, our sympathy and remembrance in our prayers. Our wish and prayer goes out to them that the Lord may find the lost and we may all be ready at the hour of His coming. GCY, 1945, p. 69.

1948 -- Relief activity to be continued

1948 -- Resettlement and colonization program
That we agree to support the resettlement and colonization program as it is possible and practical towards Paraguay, Canada, the United States, or to any other country where our less fortunate brethren may be offered an opportunity to establish a home, earn their own livelihood, and live a life of liberty that assures freedom to worship and serve God and to educate the children in the faith of the Bible and that of our fathers. GCY, 1948, p. 67.

1948 -- Spiritual ministry among refugees
That we again authorize the committee to send out one or two families or brethren for the express purpose of spiritual gospel
ministry among the refugees and brethren. GCY, 1948, p. 67.

**1948 -- Support to ministerial brethren in South America**
That since the spiritual need in the South America colonies is so great and the means of a livelihood for the ministers of the Gospel limited ...the Conference authorize the Committee of General Welfare and Public Relations to give partial support to some ministers when needed. GCY, 1948, p. 67.

**1948 -- Monthly offerings**
That we continue the practice of lifting one offering monthly for relief and rehabilitation, especially in the light of the terrific needs now developing in Korea, India, and China, plus the continued need which must be rendered to our brethren in South America. GCY, 1951, p. 71.

**1951 -- Own Mennonite Brethren program**
That we plan to direct our own Mennonite Brethren program in the effort to assist our brethren and to advance those principles of faith which we hold to be Biblical and essential but that we continue to cooperate with the Mennonite Central Committee in relief areas where united effort is advantageous and necessary. The principal forms of such a united work appear in the general relief of needy sufferers in the countries of the world, the gathering of flour and grain, the canning of meats, the contribution of clothing, the preparation and contribution of Christmas bundles, and the over-all direction of the relief and resettlement programs. GCY, 1951, p. 71.

**1951 -- Support of our workers who serve in South America**
That we support our Brother J. A. Toews and successors in their South America ministry to our brethren and others by fervent prayers and contributions. GCY, 1951, p. 71.

**1951 -- Continued spiritual ministry in connection with relief**
That the Committee of General Welfare and Public Relations be encouraged to continue to provide for the spiritual ministry in connection with its efforts to relieve physical suffering, similarly to what it did during the past years among the colonies in South America, Europe, and other areas where challenging opportunities present themselves. GCY, 1951, p. 71.

**1951 -- Subsidy to ministers in Paraguay, Brazil, Uruguay**
That we continue to subsidize the minister brethren in the Paraguay, Brazil, and Uruguay colonies so as to allow them time and strength for evangelistic work and for shepherding their flocks. GCY, 1951, p. 71.

**1951 -- Gratitude to God and rulers of countries**
That we prove ourselves sincerely grateful to our God and to the rulers of our countries for the considerate provisions made for conscientious objectors to war, which permits them to remain true to the faith of their fathers and abstain from participation in war and all acts of violence, and at the same time provides an open door for an honorable legal fulfilling of the obligation of loyal citizens in obedience to the government by, "doing work that contributes to the maintenance of the national health, safety and interest." We urge all members of our Conference to avail themselves of this opportunity to serve. GCY, 1951, p. 71.

**1951 -- Spiritual guidance by pastors and the Committee**
That the pastors of the churches together with the Committee of General Welfare and Public Relations assume the responsibility to provide ways and means for spiritual guidance and pastoral care of all young men of our Mennonite Brethren constituency called into the service of the country by the government. GCY, 1951, p. 72.

**1951 -- Ministers to lay more emphasis on peace**
That the Conference encourage and instruct all its ministers and teachers to lay more emphasis on education for peace, as a much needed testimony to a war-torn and war-weary world. GCY, 1951, p. 72.

1951 -- Voluntary service
(a) That we (the Conference) continue to develop the area of voluntary service which provides opportunity of Christian service to younger people who feel the urge of making a contribution to the cause of evangelistic as well as applied Christianity, even though they are not led to give a life to full-time Christian work. (b) (The MCC voluntary service receives 825.00 per month for each member of the M.B. Church who enters its service. Our own M.B. voluntary service projects are to be kept self-supporting as much as possible). GCY, 1951, p. 72, and GCY, 1948, p. 68 and pp. 103, 104.

1951 -- Mennonite World Conference
(a) That we favor representation at the next Mennonite World Conference to be held in Switzerland in the summer of 1952. (b) That the General Conference agrees to participate in the Mennonite World Conference and that the district conferences send the brethren whom they appoint for this purpose. GCY, 1951, p. 72.

1954 -- Reaffirmation of spiritual and physical relief service
(a) That in conjunction with MCC (we) continue to promote a world-wide program in behalf of the needy by liberal contributions of funds and personnel. (b) That we continue to support established North American brethren who are delegated to aid the younger sister churches in South America in their effort of self-edification, the winning of souls, and achieving effective organizations. (c) That we continue to make provisions for the spiritual, moral and, if need be, physical support of the young people called into the service by the government. (d) That we continue the established custom of lifting one Sunday morning offering for relief each month. GCY, 1954, p. 114.

1954 -- Relief in connection with M.B. Mission enterprises
That if opportunity and need present themselves, we render our relief in connection with our missionary enterprises. GCY, 1954, p. 114.

1954 -- United Brotherhood projects
That we carry on these projects as one united Brotherhood regardless of national boundaries and local or personal ambitions. GCY, 1954, p. 114.

1957 -- General Welfare responsibilities and Conference support
That in view of the great responsibilities for the relief needs in the various fields of the world which the Conference places upon the Welfare Board, the need for much wisdom and grace is recognized, and the Conference's support in prayer, (as well as) to pray for an open door to bring help to
our brotherhood in Russia. GCY, 1957, p. 103.

1957 -- Peace Sunday near Armistice day
That we continue the established custom of observing the Sunday nearest to Armistice day as peace Sunday. GCY, 1957, p. 103.

1957 -- Generous contributions encouraged
That we encourage the churches, as the Bible has taught us, to contribute generously to the cause of helping suffering humanity (Gal. 6: 10). That if the budget system is accepted (within our churches), this cause find its proper place. The churches may designate their contributions either for the support of assistance to our brotherhood in South America, to the relief on M. B. mission fields, or toward the service to other needy humanity. GCY, 1957, p. 103.

1957 -- Inviting delegates from other countries to the 1960 Centennial
(a) That area Conference invite one or more delegates from the South American M.B. area Conference and if possible, from the Mennonite Brethren in Russia, to come to our Centennial Conference in 1960 with provision for some financial assistance for travel. (b) That we assign this ... to the Board of Reference and Counsel to study ... and to give them authority to invite Mennonite Brethren representatives from various areas of the world to attend the centennial commemoration in 1960. Such invitation ... to be extended through the Conference Executive. GCY, 1957, p. 103.

1957 -- The draft and our youth
That in order that our youth be prepared to face the question of the draft and to live a consistent Christian life of Discipleship we urge all C.E. and C.F. organizations to have at least one session a year especially designed for the teaching of the doctrines of peace, nonresistance, separation and service. GCY, 1957, p. 103.

1957 -- Statement of recognition to P. C. Hiebert and B. B. Janz
That we as a Conference accept the following statement as a word of appreciation to the brethren named, and that we indicate our thanks by standing. (The delegation and all guests stood) GCY, 1957, p. 104.

Statement
There comes a time in the life of every faithful servant of God when the Lord says, "Well done. thou good and faithful servant." In the lives of some this may be a very brief period, again for others it may be a long span of time. Today we rejoice with two of our venerable and greatly beloved brethren, B. B. Janz, now past four score years, and P. C. Hiebert, very close to that high age, that they have been privileged to serve their Master and their fellowmen for a period of some forty years. Hosts of lives were blessed through the efforts of these two saints in Russia during the difficult years of suffering and distress and in various other areas of the world. At this occasion as these brethren retire from active work they find themselves under tremendous emotional stresses tugging at them in several directions. Looking back at the years of labor one's feeling may be, "I have accomplished so little of what I have striven to do. I unworthy servant," another, "my heart rejoices in the opportunity and grace the Lord has extended to me," another, "Lord prosper the work also in the future, supply the laborers to carry on from here." On the part of the Brotherhood there too are deep emotions. Will we be able to quickly find proper replacements for these our co-laborers? Will we be able to adequately express our sincere appreciation for their devoted and sacrificial services? We must look to the Lord to quickly thrust forth the replacements. We shall, however, consider you, brethren Hiebert and Jam, as able (mitarbeitende) consultants. And now in token of our high esteem and appreciation for your long years of untiring
and fruitful service we say thank you, Brother and Sister Hiebert, thank you Brother Janz (Mrs. Janz being deceased), and may God bless your remaining years among us and some glorious day give you a wide entrance into His presence where your reward will surely follow. "As thy days so shall thy strength be." GCY, 1957, p. 104.

1957 -- Three boards to collaborate on reorganization
That the Board of General Welfare continue to operate during the next interim as heretofore, and that the three boards, Board of Reference and Counsel, Board of Foreign Missions, and Board of General Welfare, recommend a procedure of reorganization and function of the Board of General Welfare before the end of the next two years of the Conference interim. GCY, 1957, p. 118.

1960 -- Observance of Peace Sunday to continue
That the Conference continue the established custom of observing The Sunday nearest to Veteran's Day, November 11, as Peace Sunday. GCY, 1960, p. 131.

1960 -- Challenge to our young people
That we challenge our young people to enter the l-W and Voluntary Services in the Mennonite Brethren Conference program. GCY, 1960, p. 131.

1960 -- Increased representation in MCC
(a) That in view of the increase in membership to over 25,000, thus being entitled to a larger representation ... the M.B. Conference be represented in MCC by at least two members, one from the United States of America and one from Canada. (b) That the elected member at large to be one of the representatives in MCC, and the other members to be appointed by the Board of General Welfare. GCY, 1960, p. 132.

1960 -- Joint annual meeting of the Board of Missions and Board of General Welfare
That the recommendation of the Board of Reference and Counsel (be adopted as follows) ... Whereas, the services of our boards are rapidly expanding and the concept of services is enlarging, and whereas, the work of the two boards, Board of Missions and the Board of General Welfare and Public Relations often overlaps in areas where we have common interests ... that the boards have at least one joint annual meeting to discuss overall policies and that the boards pursue inter-board relationships in those geographical areas where they have common concerns and where the guidance of the younger conferences require it ... and, that each board appoint two members who shall: 1. Define areas of common concern, and, 2. Arrange an agenda for discussion, and, 3. Work on a plan for further collaboration of the two boards. GCY, 1960, p. 133.

1963 -- Concern for the aged
See, Aged, concern for.

1963 -- Budget for 1963-1964

GOVERNMENT OFFICES

1878 -- Holding government offices
That members are not permitted to hold government office or take any part at the polls. However, we appreciate the protection we enjoy under our Government. GCY, 1878.

HAIR, WEARING OF

1927 -- Cutting of hair by sisters
That the cutting of hair by our sisters is in direct contradiction with the Word of God as found in I Cor. 11:6. GCY, 1927, p. 69.

HEAD COVERING

1878 -- Head covering of sisters
That sisters, both single and married, should not be permitted to appear in church meetings nor in family worship without the proper head covering. GCY, 1878.

**HOLIDAYS**

1890 -- Observing holidays
That we deem it a good Christian custom to observe the following holidays, since they are also observed in all of our churches: New year, Good Friday, Easter (two days), Ascension Day, Pentecost (two days), Christmas (two days). GCY, 1890, p. 106.

1921 -- Observance of Christian holidays
That the Conference recommends the observance of holidays such as Good Friday, Ascension Day, and other Christian holidays since they remind us of their great events. GCY, 1921, p. 54.

**IMMORALITY**

1943 -- Immorality and church membership
That it shall continue to be the policy of the Conference as based on the Word of God, that if members fall into a life of immorality, that they be excommunicated by the church: and if it concerns ministers of the gospel, that they forfeit for the remainder of their life the right to teach and preach the gospel, according to the following Scriptures: 1 Tim. 3:7, "Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." 1 Tim. 4:12, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believer, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." 1 Tim. 5: 19-29, "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Then that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear." Colossians 3:5, 6, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience." GCY, 1943, p. 73.

1945 -- Immorality discipline
That where brethren, especially brethren in the ministry, fall into immorality, it is decided, that the decision of the General Conference of 1943, p. 73, on this matter is Biblical; that the Committee of Reference and Counsel reaffirms this stand; that this stand be reaffirmed publicly at a future Conference; that we unitedly teach and practice our Conference position on this matter; that in matters of principle, discipline, and correction the local churches accept the authority of the decisions of the Conference. GCY, 1945, p. 69.

**INSURANCE**

1897 -- Life insurance
That it be decided unanimously that our members should not carry life insurance policies. GCY, 1897, pp. 197, 198; GCY, 1902, p. 2.

1915 -- Insurance in the Mennonite Aid Union (of Mt. Lake)
That with reference to membership in the above union, the Conference refers to its resolution of 1897, pp. 197 and 198, stating that the Conference does not permit members of the M.B. Church to belong to life insurance associations. GCY, 1915, p. 468.

1927 -- Life insurance
That it be decided that we abide by former Conference resolutions. Adopted by vote of 88 to 37. GCY, 1927, p. 69.

**JESTING AND JOKING**

1900 -- Jesting and joking
That jesting and joking by our brethren whether verbal or in writing, in conversation
or in published periodicals should be desisted from. GCY, 1900, p. 232.

**K.M.B. CONFERENCE (Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Conference)**

**1945 -- Affiliation with K.M.B. Conference in foreign missions**
That in answer to the request of the K.M.B. Church in the matter of affiliation in foreign missions work ... decided (a) That in principle we heartily welcome the affiliation desired by the K.M.B. Conference; (b) that the Conference authorizes the Board of Foreign Missions of the M.B. Conference to work out in detail a basis for the collaboration. GCY, 1945, p. 74.

**1960 -- The matter of merger**
See "Merger"

**1960 -- Regarding K.M.B. representation on M.B. boards and committees**
That inasmuch as the first few years following the official merger of the K.M.R. and M.B. Conferences will be one of progressive integration and transition, we deem it advisable that the K.M.B. Conference be represented on all boards and committees of the M.B. Conference, and therefore recommend (and adopt) the following: (a) That the K.M.B. delegation appoint or elect representatives to each of the boards of the M.B. Conference. (b) That the number of representatives shall be one on all Conference boards and committees except in the Board of Foreign Missions where two shall serve. (c) That these representatives shall serve on the M.B. boards or committees as additional members to the regularly elected M.B. boards or committees. having all the privileges, including the right to vote, and obligations of membership on that board or committee to which they are appointed. (d) That this interim arrangement of additional K.M.B. representation shall obtain for the next Conference term (1960-1963) only. GCY, 1960, pp. 34, 35.

**LAW, GOING TO**

**1900 -- Suing and going to court**
That the Conference makes reference to its resolution of 1889 (GCY, 1889, p. 89) and asks its members to get along peaceably and not to make use of the law, in order to keep the conscience clear and to have an open way to fellowship with the Lord and with the brethren. GCY, 1900, p. 233.

**LAW, OFFENSE AGAINST THE**

**1905 -- Fugitive from justice**
That in the case of persons who committed a crime and fled the country, then were converted and are asking for baptism: the Conference ruled that a handing over to the law is not required if nobody is harmed by the restitution, and the handing over to the law would not change anything. GCY, 1905, p. 340.

**LOCATION OF CONFERENCE HEADQUARTERS**

**1960 -- Location name change of Conference headquarters**
That the name of its main place of business ... be changed ... from Buhler, Kansas, to Hillsboro, Kansas, and to authorize the officers of the Board of Trustees to process the above change by an amendment to the present charter by the regular legal procedure through the Department of State of the State of Kansas under which laws this corporation exists and functions. GCY, 1960, p. 43.
LORD'S SUPPER (COMMUNION OBSERVANCE)

1878 -- Bread and wine

That in answer as to what to do with bread and wine left after observing the Lord's Supper, it was decided that bread and wine are used as a type, and that we partake of Christ's body and blood by faith. The remnants need not be divided among the partakers. GCY, 1878.

1921 -- Admission to the Lord's Supper
That a minister may serve the Lord's Supper only to believers that were baptized upon confession of their faith. GCY, 1921, p. 54.

1927 -- Administering the Lord's Supper
That only in exceptional cases where it is impossible to secure the services of an ordained minister should unordained ministers be permitted to serve at the Lord's table or at the observance of washing of the feet. The respective church should get in contact with the Home Missions Committee of the district to make proper arrangements for such services. GCY, 1927, p. 69.

1883 -- Marrying outside of the church
That a father, member of the church, cannot give his blessing to his child that withdraws from the church through marriage (outside of the church). GCY, 1883, p. 16.

1887 -- Age at marriage
That a former decision, reached in Europe, be recommended in which the Conference wishes that our members do not enter holy matrimony before they reach the age of 18 years. GCY, 1887, p. 56.

1889 -- Marriage with non-members
That only baptized believers should enter holy matrimony and be married by our church. never members of the church with those outside of the church. This resolution sustains a former Conference decision. GCY, 1889, p. 89.

1895 -- Officiating at non-member weddings
That non-member persons who are of good repute, may be given the blessings of the church for their matrimonial bond. GCY, 1895, pp. 176, 177.

1898 -- Marrying outside of the church
That permission to members to marry outside of the church be given only if the respective person qualifies to be received into (M.B.) church membership through confession of faith. GCY, 1898, p. 209.

1899 -- Uniting believer with unbeliever in wedlock
That the Conference is unanimously opposed to performing a wedding ceremony of a believer with an unbeliever. GCY, 1899, p. 217.

1900 -- Engagement announcement
That engagement of people who intend to be married should be announced in the churches (of which they are members), as has been the custom heretofore. GCY, 1900, p. 233.

MARRIAGE (WEDDINGS)

1878 -- Officiating at weddings

That ministers shall be permitted to unite children of our members in holy wedlock. But they should abstain from serving at weddings of other confessions. GCY, 1878.
**1900** -- Patronizing weddings of marriage with unbelievers
That we do not recognize, outfit, nor patronize marriage festivals of members who marry unbelievers. GCY, 1900, p. 233.

**1906** -- Officiating at marriages
That in regard to officiating at marriages that involve the joining of believers with unbelievers in holy matrimony, the Conference decided that the brethren abide by the former Conference resolutions, and be very careful to observe our Conference rules. GCY, 1906, p. 360.

**1908** -- Marriage announcement
That when members of two different (M.B.) churches intend to marry, it is required that they be announced at both churches. GCY, 1908, p. 398.

**1909** -- Officiating, where members marry non-members
(After the leading brethren of the Conference had expressed their views in opposition to officiating at weddings of members with non-members, a resolution was passed by a vote of 65 to five) that no permission to officiate at such weddings be given. GCY, 1909, p. 424.

**1909** -- Marriage of near kin
That although not forbidden in the Word of God, the Conference is opposed to the practice of marrying near relatives, since it is in violation of the natural laws of life, as well as against the constitutional laws of most states. GCY, 1909, p. 425.

**1915** -- Uniting a believer with an unbeliever
That the Conference is unanimously opposed to (an M.B. Church or minister) uniting a believer with an unbeliever, and refers to its former resolutions. GCY, 1915, p. 469.

**1927** -- Officiating at weddings
Where believers and unbelievers are to be joined in holy wedlock, that we abide by former Conference resolutions. GCY, 1927, p. 69.

**1933** -- Regarding marriage with unbelievers
That in case a church member marries an unbeliever, no examination of the non-church member is necessary, and the member forfeits his (her) church membership. In all cases the church should be guided by the circumstances and may exercise a free hand as to how to handle individual instances. Where conversion is in question, an examination is always advisable. GCY, 1933, pp. 65, 66.

**1939** -- Unity in marriage regulations
(The Conference decided to abide by the former ruling) that only baptized believers may come into consideration in the question of marriage, that is, such as have received the Biblical form of baptism upon the confession of faith. A motion passed in 1930, whereby the member could remain in the church in good standing if the other party was found to be a child of God, was rejected by the (1939) Conference, and churches were directed to observe the earlier regulations concerning this matter. GCY, 1939, p. 58.

**1948** -- Marriage of (M.B.) members with members of other denominations
That (a) When one of our members marries a member of another denomination the (respective) church council is authorized to hear the personal testimony of conversion of the member of the other denomination, and upon the merits of that testimony the church may decide: (1) Whether our member may or may not retain his or her membership in our church; (2) Whether or not the member of the other denomination may be received into our church fellowship. GCY, 1948, p. 101. (b) If and when the church is fully satisfied with respect to the questions of regeneration and baptism, the local church will, depending upon the personal preferences of the couple, either accept the member of the other denomination into our fellowship, or grant a letter of dismissal and
a certificate of good standing to our member. (c) If, however, for any reason, someone wishes not to comply with this Scriptural and fraternal provision, our member, marrying such a one is dismissed from the church membership list. GCY, 1948, p. 101.

1948 -- Adultery, church membership, divorce
That if one party becomes unfaithful to the marriage vows, the innocent party may remain a member of the church, providing that, upon a thorough investigation and examination, the innocence is proved and established.

Marriage is of God, who hath said, "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder" (Matt. 19:6). Moses gave permission for the divorce to preserve order among the hardened Jews who had departed from the ordinances of God (Matt. 19:8). This provision was contrary to the ordinance of God from the beginning of man.

In case of the unfaithfulness of a wife, adultery is committed by the husband if he remarries. The unfaithfulness of a wife merely gives the husband the right to "put her away." Whosoever marries an adulteress also committeth adultery.

It is written that we shall not keep company with an adulterer who would be called a brother (1 Cor. 5:9). His reception into the church is thus impossible (Rom. 7:3). If an adulterer confesses forgiveness of his sin, the proof of the same will be that he has left his sins. "Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall have mercy" (Prov. 28:13).

Paul says, "But if the wife depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband" (1 Cor. 7:11). This is a word to Christians. Thus, according to the word of Paul, adultery and remarriage is contrary to the command of God. If, however, one party does not want to live with the other, the second party is not under bondage to insist on remaining together. In such a case, the innocent party is not under bondage (1 Cor. 7:15). But, in all cases of adultery the word is applicable, "But if she depart, let her remain unmarried" (1 Cor. 7:11).

Even in case where the guilty party is legally remarried to another, and the possibility of a reconciliation thus cut off, the innocent party has no right to annul nor break the vow once given in holy matrimony. Romans 7: 3 states "But if her husband is dead, she is free from that law: 90 that she is no adulteress."

If such a brother or sister manifests sincere repentance and humbly seeks restoration and spiritual fellowship with the church, circumstances and an unconciliatory attitude of the other party should not hinder such a one from church membership.

The fundamental teaching of Scripture is that whosoever committeth sin, is a servant of sin. If any one is an adulterer, he should be put out of the church fellowship. "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (1 Cor. 5:13). May this be the standard guide in our church discipline.

GCY, 1948, pp. 105, 106.

MEMBERSHIP (CHURCH) (Acceptance, transfer, etc.)

1894 -- Changing membership
That members remain in the church during the time the church works with them. They should never transfer their membership until all difficulties are cleared up. GCY, 1894, p. 168.

1904 -- Accepting members without letter
That great care be exercised in accepting members from other congregations without a letter or other credentials from such church. It should be ascertained whether disturbances exist with that church, if so, they must first be removed, before the proper release is given. GCY, 1904, p. 319.
1905 -- Accepting wayward persons into membership
That member who has been out of fellowship with his home church may not be accepted by another church before he has corrected all his wrongs committed in the church which he has left when moving away in order that we as churches do not harm one another. GCY, 1905, p. 341.

1908 -- Granting church letters directly
That in regard to granting a church letter directly to a person who is moving away from one location, or sending it to the leadership of the church to which he has moved, it was decided by a vote of 56 to 37 to grant the letter to the person who requests it. GCY, 1908, p. 398.

1908 -- Membership from K.M.B. churches
That upon request on the part of several members of the K.M.B. Church to join the M.B. Church, it was decided that we accept persons who are baptized (after conversion) upon confession of faith, provided they bring a valid church letter, were peacefully released, and are in good standing with the church they are leaving. GCY, 1908, p. 398.

1924 -- Accepting members without letter
That members coming from other churches and seeking admission be accepted only by letter. If a letter is not obtainable because of the respective person's indebtedness or other involvements, the matter be first cleared in the church where he was a member. Church letters should be sent to the accepting church, and only in exceptional cases to the members themselves. GCY, 1924, pp. 65, 66.

1930 -- Retaining or losing church membership
That in answer to, "may a congregation disregard the rules and resolutions of the Conference, and permit a member to retain membership, who marries a person not immersed nor converted," the Conference refers to the Word of God, 1 Cor. 7:39, that in case of marriage by our member to a believer, although not a member of our church, if done "in the Lord," the member may retain his membership in good standing. But if a member, in violation of 2 Cor. 6:14-17, marries an unbeliever, he therewith forfeits his church membership. GCY, 1930, p. 60.

1936 -- Unwarranted acceptance into membership
That upon a complaint from the E.M.B. Church that members of their church who have been under discipline or have been excommunicated, have been accepted into membership of M.B. congregations, the Conference points out that its position is that only persons who are in good standing and who have rectified all offences in another church may be accepted into M.B. church membership. Since no special cases have been named (by our sister church), no definitely particular steps can be taken. However, if any cases exist, they should be dealt with by the respective Committee of Reference and Counsel of the district in which they may be resident. GCY, 1936, p. 69.

1942 -- Discontinuing church attendance
That when members stay away from church, the church should not neglect its pastoral duties towards such persons, but should seek such persons who do not attend the services of the church of which they are members, with the object of winning them back into the fellowship of the church. If it should be ascertained through such contact that the life of that person is not in harmony with the teachings of the Word of God, and that the person cannot be won, the church should exercise its discipline, as the merits of the case may justify. All this should be done within the period of one year. GCY, 1943, p. 76.

1945 -- Informing pastors when church members move
That in order to avoid all possible loss of members from our churches through
carelessness, each pastor in whose church members are leaving, write or inform the pastor of the locality to which they are going, so that this pastor may make immediate contact with said members at their new place of residence. GCY, 1945, pp. 71, 72.

1945 -- Statement of release from membership
That a member of our church who is in good standing and wishes to join a church of another denomination (other than the K.M.B.) is to receive only a letter of release with no recommendation for membership. GCY, 1945, p. 71.

1954 -- Associate membership
(a) That we hold, that all should submit to the Biblical form of baptism by immersion. Those adults baptized by a different mode than immersion but born again, who are seeking a closer fellowship with our church in communion service and for spiritual nurture, should live a consistent Christian life and be willing to recognize our stand on all our doctrinal convictions. (b) That the incoming Committee of Reference and Counsel study the question of associate membership and its limitations and rights and submit their recommendations to the District Conferences and for final adoption to the next General (M.B.) Conference session. GCY, 1954, p. 23.

That the statement of Baptism and Reception of Members into the Mennonite Brethren Church" be referred to the various districts for study and adoption as follows:
That whereas the Mennonite Brethren Church holds to the position that the New Testament baptism points to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ; and That whereas the historic position of the Mennonite Brethren Church is that baptized believers are gathered into churches for fellowship and edification; and That whereas there are earnest inquiries concerning the importance of the mode of baptism, and, consequently, the receiving of members into the Mennonite Brethren Church; and That whereas the General Conference delegated to the Committee of Reference and Counsel the assignment of formulating a statement on the question of baptism and the reception of members in the M.B. Church, this assignment being imperative in order that the churches of North America and South America, as well as the mission churches on the mission fields, might not become confused about and disorderly in our doctrinal teachings and practical procedures in these matters, that, therefore, the following facts and guiding principles be observed: GCY, 1957, p. 108.

1957 -- The meaning of baptism
Water baptism. Water baptism is an ordinance which Christ has appointed to be administered in the church as a visible sign of the saving experience of Christ in the believer. New Testament baptism points to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6:3-5, Colossians 2:12) and sets forth symbolically the believer's previous entrance into death and resurrection with Christ. The command of Christ for believers to be baptized is to be a perpetual obligation and is not, therefore, dispensational. Any modification of the ordinance of baptism is in violation of the authoritative command of Christ. (Matt 28:19, Mark 16: 16, Acts 2:38). GCY, 1957, p. 108.

1957 -- The mode of baptism
(a) Baptism not redemptive. Although baptism does not save the believer, let alone the mode of baptism, we do hold and teach that the act of baptism, as well as the mode of baptism, is of fundamental importance. The act of baptism is important because it is
enjoined by Christ upon every believer. The mode of baptism (immersion) is important because it is the only mode which adequately sets forth in symbol the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Any other mode of baptism invalidates the real, symbolical meaning of baptism.

(b) Immersion. A closer examination of the Scriptures will disclose the following data: First, the word "baptize" (Greek -- baptidzo) requires the meaning "immerse." (Matt. 3:6, 11; Mark 1:5, 9). Second, the believer is never said to be baptized with water, as would be required by "sprinkling" or "pouring," but always in water. (Mark 1:5, 8; Matt. 3:11; John 1:26, 31, 33; Acts 2:2, 4). Water is never said to be "baptized" upon a person. This particular usage of the verb "baptize" confirms our conclusion that its meaning is to "immerse." Third, the very circumstance attending the administration of baptism indicates that it must have been by immersion. Jesus was baptized in the Jordan. John was baptizing in Aenon near Salim because there was much water (John 3:23). In the case of the eunuch and Philip, "they both went down into the water." Fourth, consistent and thorough scholars of the Word admit that "immersion seems to have been the practice of the Apostolic age ...; and it is implied in Paul's language, especially in his figure of baptism as spiritual burial and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-5, Colossians 2: 12)" (Hasting's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. II, article on "New Testament Baptism" by J. V. Bartlett, p. 375).

It is evident that, as the church has no right to modify the symbolical meaning of the Lord's Supper, she has no right to modify the symbolical meaning of baptism, viz. burial with Christ in Baptism. Any substitution of the mode of baptism abrogates its symbolical meaning. GCY, 1957, p. 108.

1957 -- Reception of members into the church

(a) Uniformity of practice. As to the receiving of members into the church, the New Testament clearly alludes to a uniformity of practice. All believers united with the church; exulted in consciousness of the new birth through faith in Christ; gave evidence that their preparation for baptism and church membership was not based on superficial knowledge or merely on their own wishes but on the full understanding of salvation; and that they participated in fellowship and submitted themselves to the discipline of the church. There is no allusion, whatever, in the New Testament to individual believers or to a class of believers who are outside of the churches, and thus irresponsible to their authority and discipline. Thus it is evident, that as the New Testament knows of no diversion from the basic principle of believers being gathered into churches, there is likewise no provision made for partial membership in the church, such as is commonly called "associate membership."

(b) Apostles doctrine. Upon their admission into the church, the believers continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine. What doctrine? Evidently that given in the instructions received before their baptism, whatever be the reference to their subsequent and fuller instructions. A departure from these instructions was considered a departure from the teachings of the apostles. (Acts 2 clearly alludes to the instructions in lieu of baptism and church membership. Acts 2:37, 40, 41, 42). It was for this reason that Paul exhorted Timothy to "hold fast the form of sound words" (2 Tim. 1:13).

(c) The Lord's Supper. Although conflicting opinions regarding the meaning and the mode of baptism arose in the course of the history of the church; and, although we readily concede that other churches
and denominations have within their membership genuine believers, the Mennonite Brethren Church does not deem it possible in every instance to adhere to the position of exclusive communion, according to which, no individual is permitted to participate in fellowship at the Lord's Supper who has not been baptized by immersion. If there are believers who cannot submit to immersion and thus cannot identify themselves with the Mennonite Brethren Church, we would counsel them to remain in their church. However, if they cannot conscientiously remain in their church, we would advise them formally to withdraw from their church and unite with a church with which they are in full agreement.

If true believers happen to be present at the communion service, they are welcome, indeed, as guests, provided they are known to us: and, if they are not known to us, we would request them to apply to the leadership of the church for admission to the Lord's Table, to whom conclusive testimony be given as to their spiritual life. Should believers of other churches wish regularly to partake with us of the Lord's Supper, we would allow them to do so, provided their testimony satisfies the church concerning their spiritual life; that they assure us that they will not receive the communion with manifestly unsaved people; and that they submit themselves to the discipline of our church, as well as observe our principles of church membership.


1957 -- Associate membership
That non-immersed believers cannot be received for membership for the following reasons:
(a) The fundamental principles of our Conference can be altered only when we realize that our interpretation of Scripture has been one-sided and that we have erred in understanding the Mind and Spirit of the Scriptures and so grieved the Spirit of Christ. We are prepared, in such instances, openly to correct our confession of faith and the principles and practices of our church. (b) If the practice of accepting non-immersed believers is carried out in our churches, without due consideration of the consensus of our entire Brotherhood and without regard to the principles of our church, such procedure, though popularly accepted by the liberally minded, might easily tend towards divisions within the church, which (divisions) would be more serious than the rejection of a few persons. (c) Believers of other denominations are nevertheless welcome to enter a spiritual fellowship with us even to the point of interrelation in service activities, missionary enterprises, and the like, without being formally accepted into our church. (d) Were we to allow non-immersed believers to become members of our church, where should we draw the line? Some were sprinkled as infants; others, before they became believers; and still others subsequent to their conversion. If the non-immersed believers, who were sprinkled subsequent to their conversion, be admitted into our churches, would we not thereby acknowledge the validity of sprinkling (or pouring) and undervalue the Biblical principle of immersion? It is extremely difficult to find a satisfactory solution to the problem of admitting into our church non-immersed believers and, at the same time, console the conscience and assure the hearts of our members. A greater assurance will be ours, if we continue the practice of accepting only immersed believers. We can change our principles and practices only if our church arrives at a conclusive conviction that the mode of baptism is meaningless. It would be easier for a more liberally-minded person to accept this position than for one who holds to
the verbal-plenary inspiration of the Scriptures and seeks to interpret the form and meaning of the Word of God.

(e) A different situation obtains in the matter of accepting a body (group) of Christians, who, as a district conference, wish to enter into an interrelationship with our General Conference, on the basis of missionary enterprises, and the like. We may accept such groups, provided they practice immersion on the mission fields. Their ministers would be recognized in all churches and be welcomed in the ministry of the Word. Their members would also be welcome to participate in the communion.

Should any one of their members, however, move within the proximity of a Mennonite Brethren Church and wish to be formally admitted into the church, he must submit to immersion, otherwise he remains a guest in the church.

(f) Conclusion. The Conference does not consider it our mission to increase our membership at the expense of our basic principles or to enlarge our churches by confusing the minds of our members through a new church practice. Whenever the pastoral leadership becomes aware of a spiritual retrogression in his church he shall seek to solve the problem with a revival of his church, instead of seeking to mitigate the evil by an increase in membership. (See Revelation 3:1-6). The Committee of Reference and Counsel deems it to be the responsibility of the church to increase their spiritual power, to instruct the spiritually immature members in the knowledge of the Word of God, and to inspire faith and obedience through the Gospel of Christ. In conclusion, we should like to remind ourselves of the experiences of our first brethren here in America. When the issue of the union of believers of other churches was fervently upheld, they relinquished their fervor on the basis of accepted practice and resolved to hold fast to the principles of the Mennonite Brethren Church. Their steadfast position evoked disapproval, attacks, and even divisiveness within the church; nevertheless, the church increased. Were we merely concerned about large numbers and greater assemblies, the admixture of our groups were a way to that end. But as a Conference, we are concerned that the grace of God, that bringeth salvation might achieve its objective in a practical life, as it is declared in Titus 2:11-14. GCY, 1957, pp. 109, 110, 111.

1963 -- Membership of non-immersed believers

That, (a) As a brotherhood we reaffirm our understanding of Scripture with reference to water baptism and church membership, namely, that born-again believers should, upon their personal request, be baptized by immersion after an open declaration of their faith in Jesus Christ and their personal commitment to follow Him in discipleship; and (b) that such baptized believers are to be received into the church fellowship, growth and service.

(c) We recognize that the body of Jesus Christ is one and we fellowship with all truly born-again believers who follow Jesus Christ in obedience to the Word of God; but we further recognize that a working fellowship always necessitates agreement on major issues of doctrine and ethics. This is especially true with respect to those who are called to teach and give guidance in the church.

(d) As a brotherhood we permit local churches to accept into fellowship believers who have been baptized upon an experiential and confessed faith with a mode of baptism other than immersion. In order to maintain and foster unity in doctrine and polity such members should agree to the following: (1) That they accept the confession of faith of the Mennonite Brethren Church. (2) That they will be baptized by immersion as soon as they
receive such light through the Word and in fellowship with others who hold that conviction. (3) That they will not function or be candidates in any office requiring ordination in the Mennonite Brethren Church. (4) That such privileges relate to fellowship in the local church and therefore churches will not transfer by letter any members received into fellowship without immersion. GCY, 1963, pp. 38, 39.

1963 -- Study concerning reception of non-immersed believers
That the study that was made by the Board of Reference and Counsel concerning the reception into fellowship of non-immersed believers be made available to the churches through the Conference papers or as an appendage to the minutes. GCY, 1963, p. 45.

MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE (MCC)

(See also General Welfare and Public Relations)

1954 -- Principles governing relations with MCC
That, because of the constantly expanding program of MCC, with periodical additions of new phases of service, some of them not related to the specific aspect of relief, and because of growing uncertainty in our Conference constituency as to our responsibility toward such projects, and because of the eventual withdrawal of some of our churches from the ministry of MCC which may result from such hesitancy,..., that we as a Conference define our principles which are to govern our future relationship with the Mennonite Central Committee in order to maintain the full confidence and cooperation of our entire constituency in this ministry. As a basis for ...such principles, we (as Conference) adopt the following principles to govern our relationship of the cooperative program with MCC:
(a) That we submit a distinct statement of objectives and purpose of every MCC activity other than direct emergency relief work and the rehabilitation of our suffering brethren to the District Conferences and General Conference, and permit them to decide whether we desire to participate in them or not. (During the interim the Committee of Reference and Counsel takes the place of the Conference.)
(b) That our participation in the important ministry of relief be as closely as possible coordinated with the missionary objectives of our Conference of bringing the Gospel to the people to whom we minister relief.
(c) That where opportunities present themselves of extending urgently needed relief to our own missionary constituency, that this need receive preference to the needs in the general MCC program.
(d) That we appreciate the effort on the part of MCC in the past to maintain a contact with the Conference in the selection of personnel from our constituency. That it is also the wish of the Conference for the future that only such brethren serve in any branch of MCC as members of their committee or in their advisory council as elected or appointed for such responsibility either by the Conference or on authorized Conference committee.
(e) That the Conference adopt the procedure of electing the member at large of the Committee of General Welfare and Public Relations first to serve as the Mennonite Brethren representative in the MCC.
GCY, 1954, pp. 21,22.

MENNONITE WORLD CONFERENCE

1951 -- Representation at Mennonite World Conference
(a) That we favor' representation at the Mennonite World Conference to be held in
Switzerland in the summer of 1952. (b) That the district conferences send brethren whom they appoint for this purpose. GCY, 1951, p. 72.

1954 -- Mennonite World Conference
That in view of the opportunities, channels, and challenges of giving a positive Evangelical testimony, we again send representatives to the Mennonite World Conference to be held in Karlsruhe, Germany, in 1957.... That the Committee of Reference and Counsel ... appoint the speakers allotted to our Conference.... That the various district conferences be encouraged to consider ... sending representatives also. GCY, 1954, p. 20.

1957 -- Constitution, Mennonite World Conference
That the proposed constitution and by-laws for the Mennonite World Conference be referred to the various district conferences for study and approval. (For complete copy of World Conference constitution see M.B. Conference Year Book, 1957, pp. 114, 115, 116). GCY, 1957, p. 114.

1957 -- Representation on Mennonite World Conference Council
That the incoming Board of Reference and Counsel be instructed to appoint a Conference representative to serve on the council for the Mennonite World Conference. GCY, 1957, p. 116.

MERGER (of M.B. and K.M.B. Conferences)

1945 -- Collaboration in foreign missions with K.M.B. Conference

1948 -- Note:
In 1948 the officers of the M.B. Conference extended an invitation to the officers of the K.M.B. Conference to consider the matter of having the two sister conferences unite.

1951 -- Merger Invitation to K.M.B. Conference
That the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church extend an invitation to our sister conference, the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Conference, to consider jointly the possibility of uniting their spiritual forces into one general conference for the sake of advancing the cause of Christ and for our mutual strengthening in the Lord and that the following may be considered as a possible basis for such unity:
(a) That the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Conference join the General Conference of the M.B. Church as a district conference and thus retain its identity.
(b) That the K.M.H. Conference voluntarily accept all the privileges and responsibilities, spiritually and materially as do the other district conferences of our General Conference.
(c) That we charge the Committee of Reference and Counsel that will be elected for the next term, with the responsibility of inviting the Conference Executive Committee of the K.M.B. Conference to a joint session in the very near future for the purpose of seeking to work out fuller details for a possible merger. GCY, 1951, p. 123.

1957 -- Letter of response regarding merger with K.M.B. Conference
That the following letter written by Brother B. J. Braun, be sent to our sister Conference of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Church who have voted to merge with our Conference after their 1958 Conference sessions:
Rev. C. F. Plett, Chairman, Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Conference, Doland, South Dakota. Dear Brother in Christ: Your good letter of October 11, 1957, conveying the official communication that the church of the K.M.B. Conference, through its delegates, has decided by a two-thirds majority vote to merge with the Conference
of the M.B. Church of N.A., was received
with joy by the delegates of said Conference
now in session here at Yarrow, B.C.,
Canada.
This historic development is to us an
encouraging confirmation of the fact that the
official overture made to your brotherhood
by the Conference leadership of our
brotherhood in 1948 was indeed of
divine providence and of spiritual
motivation toward spiritual unity. On
the other hand, the time taken on your part
to study and consider this step, strongly
indicates that a great deal of prayerful care,
spiritual concern and wise leadership has
gone into this weighty decision. May the
Lord continue to guide you.
We fully recognize that many details and
many hours of mutual consultation remain
before we may be able to consummate
negotiations and officially effect the
merger.
In view of the fact that there may be many
emotional, geographic and spiritual factors
which are best known to the leadership of
the K.M.B. Conference, we deem it best,
that all further initiative and pace of
dispatch, be left to the duly elected
committees and officers of the K.M.B.
Conference.
Please feel free to address yourself to our
newly elected Conference chairman, Brother
Dan E. Friesen of Reedley, California, who
together with the Committee of Reference
and Counsel stands ready to negotiate the
merger.
We are praying that the Lord, the Head of
the Church, may hasten the day when we, as
two like-minded brotherhoods will join
hands to become one united evangelical
body for a strengthened testimony of
the saving grace of our Lord and Savior,
Jesus Christ "till He come."
We greet you with Phil. 1:3-6. In the name
of the Conference of the Mennonite
Brethren Church of North America. (Written
at Yarrow, B.C., Canada, October 23, 1957.)
GCY, 1957, pp. 116, 117.
1960 -- M.B. document of merger
(That the M.B.) Document of Merger, Nov.
14, 1960 be adopted as follows: In the years
1860 and 1869, respectively, there came into
being two distinct evangelical movements --
the Mennonite Brethren and the Krimmer
Mennonite Brethren. Though distinct one
from the other in time, place and
organization, they were, nevertheless,
identical in all spiritual essentials: they
sprang from a common cultural and
religious root. In both instances it was the
experience of conversion through a personal
acceptance of Christ as Saviour which gave
rise to the new spiritual movement.
Independently both were led to the
conviction that "baptism upon faith" by
immersion is the fullest biblical expression
of the true significance of this ordinance;
both stressed and glorified in the assurance
of salvation (Heilsgewissheit). Both sensed
an immediate urge and burden to testify
personally and to evangelize locally and
globally. The message of both was
conversion, immersion, separation,
assurance, evangelism and an unequivocal
acceptance of the Bible as the
absolute authority in all matters of faith and
practice ("Was sagt das Wort?" was the
characteristic question). Both exercised
strict church discipline with reverential
severity: both caught the significance of the
New Testament word "brethren" and
adopted it for their name; the Mennonite
Brethren, born January 6, 1860, Elisabethtal,
South Russia, and the Krimmer Mennonite
Brethren, born September 21, 1869, Crimes,
Russia. Both continued to adhere to such
Mennonite-Anabaptist distinctives as non-
resistance, nonconformity, abstention from
the oath, and simplicity of life.
Through the courses of a century now these
two brotherhoods have wrought and lived
side by side. The spiritual affinity between
the K.M.B. and M.B. Conferences has constantly been symbolized by a close work-relationship (Arbeitsgemeinschaft) over many years in the areas of foreign missions and Christian higher education as well as by an unqualified mutual acceptance of members by regular letter of transfer. The desire to unite our two Conferences has been voiced repeatedly by individual brethren from both sides over a great number of years. In order to reactivate negotiations and to implement the process, the Mennonite Brethren Conference through the Committee of Reference and Counsel made a concrete overture for a merger to the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Conference while the latter was in session at Yale, South Dakota, October 10, 1949.

The official response of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Conference through its Merger Committee was dated June 16, 1956, and submitted to the Mennonite Brethren Conference while in session at Yarrow, B.C., October 20-23, 1957.

Aside from the above-mentioned official documents there have been numerous consultative negotiations between delegated representatives of the two conferences. As a result of the faithful labors of many brethren a broad base of agreements has been established and details sufficiently regulated to clear the way for the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Conference and the Mennonite Brethren Conference to merge in one brotherhood for full fellowship and service as one denominational body to promote the Kingdom of God through evangelism, church building, Christian higher education, publication, home and foreign missions, and the alleviation of human suffering. To this end we here and now clasp hands as a token of our spiritual unity and to pledge henceforth to be one organizationally, as we are organically, and to dedicate our material possessions, our spiritual gifts and ourselves to Christ "who died for us" -- "till He come." GCY, 1960, pp. 27, 28.

1960 -- K.M.B. document response to merger

Brother chairman, officials and delegates of the Mennonite Brethren Conference, and Krimmer Mennonite Brethren representatives: Greetings in the name of our Lord: In an early German copy of our constitution, we find the following incident recorded in the preface: In order to maintain peace with England, the people of Holland at one time made a coin. On one side they portrayed a yoke of oxen with this inscription: "United we are strong." On the other side some earthen crocks were pictured floating on the ocean with this inscription, "Against each other, we are broken." This speaks to us of unity and its blessing.

We may speak of three levels of unity: first, organizational unity. We have gathered here today for the purpose of becoming one in organization. We are deleting the geographical designation of origin, the "Krimmer," not because we are bankrupt, discouraged, or too small to carry on a program, nor because we have lost vision. We are prepared to become one in body, one in program and one in purpose because we believe it would honor the Lord. But we recognize that there is yet a higher form of unity, the unity of doctrine or theology.

This second level of unity, doctrinal, is one in which we have shared a similar faith for almost a century, being born in the same revival. A few cardinal principles on which we stand are our faith in the Bible: God's divine revelation, as our final authority in faith and practice; the new birth and changed life, the need for all men; the church, as the body of Christ of which He is the head and only mediator between God and man: non-conformity to the world, its prince and its principles; Christian discipleship, as a walk of obedience and
love to the Savior; and the Christian witness and mission of the church to the unconverted everywhere. On these principles we agree, we trust, but there is yet a higher level of unity. Our spiritual unity is the most desirable. In Acts two we read of how the Holy Spirit of God produced in believers a oneness of heart and mind, so that they had "all things common." This unity and the resulting union of believers was a gift of the Holy Spirit. This spiritual unity supersedes but results in or includes the first two levels of unity. For this we pray. We believe such organizational, theological and spiritual unity honors the Lord and is the fulfillment of His prayer in John 17: "That they may be one." The end and purpose of such union is twofold: (1) "That they may be made perfect (mature) in one." in other words, the edification and perfection of the believer and body of Christ. (2) The conversion of the world, "and that the world may know that thou hast sent me," verse 23, or as verse 21 says, "that the world may believe." May our union here today result in our mutual encouragement, edification, and strengthening in the Lord and His work, and also be a real witness to the glory of Christ and His body before a lost and confused world to the end that many may turn to Christ in these last days. GCY, 1960, pp. 28, 29.

(The chairman, Brother Dan E. Friesen, and Brother C. F. Plett then clasped hands and offered prayer. Brother Eugene Gerbrandt led the congregation in singing "Blest Be the Tie That Binds.")

(Thus the merger was accomplished and the two Conferences of brethren are now one. All documents read during the merger were adopted for record). GCY, 1960, p. 29.

MINISTERS' HANDBOOK

1939 -- Ministers' HANDBOOK
The Conference charged the newly elected Committee of Reference and Counsel to implement the matter of providing an M.B. Ministers' Handbook through the nomination of a committee for that purpose. GCY, 1939, p. 58.

1945 -- Printing of Ministers' handbook
That the printing of the manuscript of a ministers' handbook prepared by the Committee of Reference and Counsel be authorized, and that the (M.B.) Publishing House be delegated to compile and complete this book. GCY, 1945, p. 75.

MINISTERS AND THE MINISTRY

1893 -- May a minister conduct a business?

That a minister should choose as simple a vocation (or business) as possible in order not to have his own spiritual life nor that of others harmed on that account. GCY, 1893, p. 156.

1901 -- Complaints against ministers and elders

(No formal action was taken, but the advice was given) that 1 Tim. 5:19 be the guide, and that all workers so walk with God that there arise no valid reason for complaint.
against ministers and elders. GCY, 1901, p. 247, 248.

MINISTERS' RETIREMENT

1945 -- Plan for assistance to retired ministers
That the recommendation by the Committee of Reference and Counsel (to refer) this question to the home missions committee of the General Conference which, together with the Board of Trustees, is to work out a plan to be presented at the next (1948) Conference (be adopted). GCY, 1945, p. 72.

1948 -- Ministers' retirement plan of the M.B. Conference
That the Board of Trustees and the Committee of Home Missions continue to study the matter (of a ministerial retirement plan) first draft of which was presented at the 1948 Conference, see GCY, 1948, pp. 102, 103). GCY, 1948. p. 103.

1951-- Ministers' retirement
That the details of the plan (submitted by the Board of Trustees) be duplicated and submitted to the Committee of Reference and Counsel for study and approval and then remitted to the various churches for study and adoption if they so see fit. GCY, 1951, pp. 95, 96.

MISSION, FOREIGN

1879-- Beginning of mission work as a Conference
That our Conference begin mission work, that an evangelist be engaged and weekly offerings be held to defray such incurred expenses. GCY, (Mimeographed manuscript), 1879, p. 3.

1884 -- Foreign missions
That the Conference participate in India (foreign) missions by sup- porting a native worker on the (Baptist) field with $100 per year. GCY, 1884, p. 25.

1885 -- National worker support
That the Conference support two national workers at $100 per year on the India (Baptist) field. GCY, 1885, p. 34.

1885 -- Foreign missions committee established
That the Conference establish a committee to administer the foreign missions funds. (Eight brethren were elected). GCY, 1885, p. 35.

1887 -- Africa mission support and candidate training
That the Conference appropriate 1100 for mission work in Africa, and contribute 1150 annually towards the school expense of the candidate in training for mission service. GCY, 1887, p. 53.

1889 -- Appropriation for missions
That the Conference support Brother John Berg (in his educational preparation for mission service) with $150, two national missionaries in India with 1100 each; and appropriate 1100 for Africa. GCY, 1889, p. 87.

1889 -- Looking for a mission field
That the Brethren Abr. Schellenberg, Cor. P. Wedel, and J. F. Harms, look around for a mission field, and should there be traveling expenses, to pay them out of the foreign missions treasury. GCY, 1889, p. 87.

1893 -- Support for the Cameroon field, Africa
That the Conference appropriate %200 for the engagement of national preachers on the Cameroon (Baptist) field in Africa (where Brother P. H. Wedel at the time planned to go for service). GCY, 1893, p. 153.

1893 -- Release of John Berg
That, due to poor health, upon his own request, the Conference release Brother John Berg from his commitment to serve the

1894 — American Indians
That the Conference appropriate $150 for work among the Oklahoma Indians, and to engage Brother Henry Kohfeld, who feels a call to this ministry, for a period of four months, to labor in Oklahoma near some M.B. settlements. GCY, 1894, p. 208.

1895 — Comanche Indians
That since a location has been found for mission work among the Comanche Indians, and since the (U.S.) Government donates 160 acres of land for this purpose, the Conference appropriate $800 for a missionary residence and a church, and $500 for the support of Brother Henry Kohfeld as missionary. GCY, 1895, p. 175.

1895 — Appropriation for India and Africa
The Conference also voted $200 to support Abr. Friesen in India, and $400 for the mission in the Cameroons of Africa where P. H. Wedel serves (at the time). GCY, 1895, p. 175.

1896 — Comanche Indian Mission, Post Oak
(a) That the Conference ordain Brother Henry Kohfeld, (b) and ask the missions committee to find a (deaconess) sister to be sent to assist the Kohfelds in the mission work. (c) To appropriate $200 for additional building needs. GCY, 1896, pp. 185, 186.

1896 — Africa mission
That the Conference consider the Brethren P. H. Wedel and Heinrich Enns as our missionaries (serving at the time in Africa on the Baptist, Cameroon field), and to see whether within the near future they may be able to come into M.B. Conference mission work. GCY, 1896, p. 189.

1896 — Appropriations
That the Conference appropriate $150 for Abr. Friesen, India; $150 for P. H. Wedel, Cameroon; and $200 for Heinrich Enns. GCY, 1896, p. 189.

1896 — Missions committee reduced to five members
(That the Conference elect the Brethren) Abr. Schellenberg, John Foth, J. F. Harms, Cor. P. Wedel, Abr. Richert, to serve in the (foreign) missions committee for three years, and allow traveling expenses to be paid from the foreign missions treasury. GCY, 1896, p. 190.

1897 — Promotion of Comanche Indian Mission
(a) That in order to speed the mission outreach among the Comanche Indians in Oklahoma, and since Brother A. J. Becker is completing his education, and is willing to serve as teacher, the Conference appropriates $200 to construct a school building, and $200 as salary for Brother Becker. (bl To grant Missionary Kohfeld a tent, a month's furlough, and an interpreter for one month. GCY, 1897, pp. 196, 197. Note: The missions committee reported in 1898 that operating a school for the Indians would also require dormitories for the students. Since the Conference had not authorized the committee to construct and operate a dormitory, the committee had not started the school for Indians. The school matter for Indians was dropped in 1898.)

1898 — India mission to be opened
That the Conference accept Brother (and Sister) N. N. Hiebert as missionaries to India (with a view of starting an M.B. Mission in India), and to entrust to the missions committee the further preparation for and sending out (of the Hieberts) to the field. GCY, 1898, p. 207.

1898 — Advisory mission board established
That the leading brethren of the individual churches constitute an (advisory) Mission Board to be drawn into consultation and
counsel by the missions committee. GCY, 1898, p. 208.

**1898 -- M.B. Mission endeavor to be independent**

(General opinion of the Conference) that as a Conference we do not want to subordinate our mission endeavor to other mission organizations or societies. If individual brethren or sisters make themselves available for service to outside mission organizations or societies, then their support and welfare becomes the responsibility of those who send them out. GCY, 1898, p. 208.

**1899 -- A second sister for Indiahoma**

That the missions committee be charged to send another single sister, if one can be found, to assist the Henry Kohfelds and sister Maria Regier (at Post Oak, Indiahoma). GCY, 1899, p. 215.

**1899 -- Rate of support to India missionaries**

That the Conference appropriate $700 for support of the N. N. Hieberts, and $300 for single sisters (at the time Elizabeth Neufeld) in India. GCY, 1899, p. 215.

**1899 -- Foreign missions committee reduced to three, and term staggered**

That the following brethren serve (as indicated), Abr. Schellenberg, chairman, one year; Franz Ediger, treasurer, two years; J. F. Hanns, secretary, three years. GCY, 1899, p. 216.

**1900 -- Possibility of Oklahoma Indians being relocated**

That (in spite of the possibility that the Comanche Indians at Indiahoma may be relocated) the (M.B. Post Oak) station continue. If a change becomes necessary, that Brother Kohfeld together with the missions committee do the best that can be done (under the circum- stances). GCY, 1900, p. 226.

**1900 -- Founding a mission station in India**

That we proceed with the founding of our own mission station in India: that we rejoice that according to latest information from Brother N. N. Hiebert, a mission compound is available at Secunderabad; and that we allow the missions committee together with the missionaries on the field to take the necessary steps to implement the matter. GCY, 1900, p. 227.

**1900 -- Mission board chairman to visit churches**

That the chairman of the mission board visit the churches and stations to create interest in foreign missions and give information; that an allowance of 1200 annually be granted to him: and that the traveling expenses be covered by special offerings. GCY, 1900, p. 230.

**1901 -- Kohfelds continue, A. J. Beckers added**

(a) That we recognize the work of Brother and Sister Henry Kohfeld (at Post Oak), and wish them courage and blessings for continued service. (b) That Brother and Sister A. J. Becker be sent to assist the Kohfelds, be allowed a $400 support per year, and that the Conference build a separate residence for them. GCY, 1901, p. 240.

**1901 -- Acceptance of the J. H. Pankratz's for India**

That Brother and Sister John H. Pankratz be sent as workers to India, and be allowed $800 support per year. GCY, 1901, p. 242.

**1901 -- Acceptance of the D. F. Bergthold for India**

That Brother and Sister D. F. Bergthold be accepted as missionaries for India ...with an annual support of $500. GCY, 1901, p. 242.

**1901 -- N. N. Hiebert traveling missionary**

That Brother N. N. Hiebert be engaged as traveling missionary with an annual support of 8600. GCY, 1901, p. 248.
By 1904 there were 60 members in the (advisory) Board of Missions -- Verwaltungskomitee -- of whom 1/3 were elected each year for a three-year term.

**1906 -- Staff at Post Oak Mission reduced**

(After an explanation by the missions committee, that the Post Oak station did not require two full-time families, it was decided) That in the future only one (missionary) family be assigned to Post Oak. Which family is to serve, is left to the decision of the missions committee and the brethren Abr. Richert, M. M. Just, and Peter Richert. GCY, 1906, p. 351.

**1906 -- Furlough allowance to single sisters**

That the sister (from India) who had returned for furlough, be allowed a yearly support of $600. GCY, 1906, p. 351.

**1906 -- Ramapatnam patronage**

That since the (Baptist) Missionary Union has been gracious to place at our service as assistant preachers some of their missionary students trained in their Ramapatnam Seminary, the Conference acknowledges this with gratitude, and appropriate $100 annually towards the support of the school. GCY, 1906, p. 352.

**1907 -- Resolutions on Foreign missions**

(a) That the J. H. Pankratzes be granted $200 to cover illness expenditures. (b) That an appropriation of $2,000 be made for a new station residence at (Nagarkurnool). (c) That we allow missionary families on furlough $600 per year, and in the future make special provisions. That missionaries are not obligated to work (in return for the financial furlough allowance) since as a rule they come home for recuperation. Expenses incurred in church visitations are to be borne by the respective churches. (d) That Sister Elisabeth S. Neufeld (India) be supported in her work or on furlough, according to what is most feasible. (e) That newly appointed missionaries from the time they were accepted for mission service until the time they land in India, be allowed the salary we pay evangelists here in the homeland. (f) That Brother A. J. Becker be ordained and that the church at Isabella, Oklahoma, perform the ordination. (g) That Brother Henry Kohfeld receive a salary of $300 for another year, but that his time and occupation be left to his own disposal.

**1907 -- Katharina Lohrenz accepted**

That Sister Lohrenz be sent to India for educational (school) work among children. GCY, 1907, p. 373.

**1908 -- Ordination of the J.H. Voths and Katharina Lohrenz**

Since it is required that missionaries be ordained before being sent out, that the J. H. Voths be ordained by the M. B. Church in Minnesota, and that Sister Katharina Lohrenz be commissioned (geweiht) for her (school) service by the Ebenfeld congregation. GCY, 1907, p. 373.

**1908 -- Health and furlough of J. H. Pankratzes**

(a) That missionaries, J. H. Pankratz, remain in India another year if possible, but that on account of health conditions, they come home before a breakdown. (b) That the missions committee inquire of the Pankratzes, and that the workers on the field confer together, and that if they deem it advisable, the Pankratzes come home before it becomes too difficult for them. GCY, 1908, p. 389.

**1908 -- Regarding Sister Elisabeth Neufeld**

That Sister Elisabeth Neufeld be again supported with $300, and that the decision (as to whether to remain in India or to come home to nurse her parents) be left to her. GCY, 1908, p. 390.

**1908 -- Final allowance to Henry Kohfeld**
That a final appropriation to $200 be allowed Brother Henry Kohfeld, and to consider it the termination of Conference (financial) support. GCY, 1908, p. 390.

1908 -- Support to Ramapatnam renewed
That, unless changed in the future, to appropriate $100 annually for Ramapatnam since our native workers in India are trained there, and since we have supported this (seminary) in the past. GCY, 1908, p. 390.

1912 -- Note:
The 1912 Conference took place after the first three-year interim.

1912 -- Furlough for Anna Suderman and Katharina Schellenberg
That (due to climate, the difficulty of the work, the loneliness, the isolation -- which fatigue) the Sisters Anna Suderman and Katharina Schellenberg be invited to come home for furlough (even though they have not been in India seven years). GCY, 1912, pp. 434, 435.

1912 -- Children's allowance
That a children's allowance of $100 per year be provided for every (missionary) child attending school; if inadequate, to permit the mission board to make the necessary adjustments (in the amount). GCY, 1912, p. 435.

1912 -- Land grant by feudal king in India
That the Conference accept the land offered as a donation by a feudal king in India for a mission station, and transmit to the king our greetings and our thanks. GCY, 1912, p. 436.

1919 -- Resolutions on foreign missions
(Although the minutes do not record a vote, apparently the recommendations by the committee on foreign missions listed in this paragraph were adopted): (a) That the missionaries in India receive a salary of $1,000 per year during the first term, and $1,200 during subsequent terms. Single sisters are to receive half this amount. (b) That children's allowance be continued during furlough. (c) That this support stops with the age of 18. (d) That the salary of Brother and Sister Becker (Post Oak) be set at $1,000. (e) That the India stations be subsidized as follows: Hughestown field, $2,400; Nagarkurnool, $2,400; Deverakonda, $2,400; Wanaparthy, $1,400; and after their return, Brother and Sister (F.A.) Janzen, $2,000; the school conducted by Sister Hanneman, $2,500; Brother and Sister Voth, $1,000; Brother and Sister Bergthold, $1,500; Brother and Sister Janzen, $400; for medical work to Sister Schellenberg, $400; to Sister Wall, $400; for Wanaparthy, $200; for new buildings, as needed: for interpreter at Indiahoma, $50; for a visitation tour at Indiahoma, according to need. (f) That as in previous years so in the future, the committee be allowed to meet unforeseen costs. GCY, 1919, pp. 477, 478.

1912 -- Regarding obligations toward the Bartel mission
That the Conference not grant permission for brethren to obligate themselves through voting privileges in the Association of the (China) Bartel Mission, nor does the Conference grant permission to collect funds (for the same) in the churches. To brethren and sisters who wish to make personal contributions for this cause, it is not denied. GCY, 1912, p. 445.

1912 -- Regarding the F. J. Wiens (China) mission
That in the light of the demands of our (M.B.) missions, we are not able to accept Brother F. J. Wiens, and want to allow the matter to rest another three years. GCY, 1912, p. 446.

1912 -- Solicitations by outsiders
That with reference to collecting funds on the part of outsiders (of the Conference) visitors, that all such collectors apply to the foreign missions committee, present their credentials, and seek to obtain a recommendation, before they are permitted
to collect funds in our churches. GCY, 1912, p. 446

1915 -- Children's support during furlough
That (missionary) children, beginning with the age of seven, be supported at the rate of $50 per year during furlough time in the homeland. GCY, 1915, p. 453.

1915 -- B. F. Wiens accepted for service in India
That Brother and Sister B. F. Wiens (be accepted as missionaries and) be sent to India. GCY, 1915, p. 455.

1912 -- Note:
It was explained that the (advisory) Mission Board (Verwaltungskomitee) is now especially charged to administer the mission endowment fund, and support the Mission Board in its responsibilities. GCY, 1912, p. 436.

1919 -- Engagement of new missionaries
That Brother and Sister J. H. Lohrenz and Sister Helena L. Warkentin be sent to India as soon as possible. GCY, 1919, p. 478.

1919 -- P. V. Balzers
That Brother Balzer be given an opportunity to become acquainted in our churches. GCY, 1919, p. 478.

1919 -- South China mission
That the Conference accept the (south) China field served by Brother and Sister F. J. Wiens as a General M.B. Conference mission, and them as M. B. Conference missionaries, and send out two single sisters to assist in the work. GCY, 1919, pp. 479 and 481.

1919 -- Compensation to missions treasurer and secretary
That the treasurer (of the missions committee) receive an honorarium of $100, and the secretary of $200 per year. GCY, 1919, p. 480.

1919 -- Two single sisters accepted for China service
That two single sisters be sent to China, and that the other sisters do not consider themselves rejected, but be active in our homeland. GCY, 1919, p. 481.

1919 -- Acceptance of Helena Heppner and Tina Kornelsen
That Sister Helena Heppner be sent out (to China) as nurse, and Sister Tina Kornelsen as teacher. GCY, 1919, p. 481.

1919 -- Delaying additional appointments
That the other sisters who have applied namely, Anna M. Hiebert, Minneapolis; Anna Suderman and Sophie Richert, California; be sent out as soon as the Conference recognizes a need for it, and as soon as the committee finds open doors for dispatching them. GCY, 1919, p. 481.

1919 -- Accepting the J. S. Dicks
That Brother and Sister J. S. Dick acquaint themselves in our churches, and after that be sent out to China. GCY, 1919, p. 481.

1919 Note:
The mission board reported that Brother and Sister B. F. Wiens, who had been accepted for India in 1915, were now being considered for service in China. The Wienses hesitated somewhat. The Conference took note of this, and passed the following resolution: An encouraging word to Brother B. F. Wiens That Brother Wiens calmly continue his service which has become dear to him (on the staff) at Tabor College, that he remain of firm confidence, preserve reliance on God, and that the Lord open the doors for him for service on the mission field of his preference. GCY, 1919, p. 481.

1919 -- Churches to ordain and equip outgoing missionaries
The Conference recommends, that the home churches of missionaries who are to be sent out to the mission field, ordain them and to equip them for the mission ministry. GCY, 1919, p. 482.
1919 -- Appeal for acceptance by Africa mission
(In reply to A. A. Janzen's request to the Conference to accept the Congo field, it was ruled) That the Conference send hearty greetings to Brother and Sister A. A. Janzen, and (the Conference) wishes them God's rich blessings in their ministry. If the Lord should open additional ways and send means, the acceptance of the Africa work could later be taken into consideration. GCY, 1919, p. 483.

1919 -- Cable to F. J. Wiens, China
That a cable be dispatched to Brother and Sister F. J. Wiens informing them that their mission in China has been accepted as a Conference endeavor. (J. W. Wiens, treasurer, will send the message). CCY, 1919, pp. 485, 486.

1919 -- Vacation for Indiahoma missionaries
That the Conference grants a short vacation for recuperation to our Indiahoma missionaries. GCY, 1919, p. 486.

1919 -- Home for missionary children
(In regard to the matter of establishing a mission home for children of missionaries, the Conference ruled) That the Conference charges the mission committee to initiate efforts in this matter. GCY, 1919, p. 486. Note: Because of the three-year Conference interim, more responsibility for decisions was placed upon the committees and boards. Beginning with 1919 and following, the Conference began to rely more upon recommendations from the mission committee, also called mission board, for its resolutions. Many details of operational nature that in former years had been worked out on the Conference floor, were becoming responsibility of the mission board. The mission board presents recommendations accepted by the Conference.

1921 -- Report of mission receipts in Canada
(a) That we request Brother J. M. Elias (then, together with W. J. Bestvater) provisional treasurer of foreign missions receipts in Canada to send in his complete report, and to have it added to the report of the General Conference foreign missions treasury. (b) That we convey our gratitude to the Brethren Bestvater and Elias through our treasurer (J. W. Wiens) for their service of keeping financial records (of mission funds received in Canada). GCY, 1921, p. 17.

1921 -- Assistant treasurer elected for Canada
(a) That the Conference elect a brother in Canada who receives mission funds in Canada, and remits them monthly to the General Conference missions treasurer, in order that these together with the rest of the mission receipts can be published monthly in the Zionsbote. (b) That Brother John M. Elias of Winkler, Manitoba, be elected to serve as treasurer for Canada. GCY, 1921, pp. 24, 25.

1921 -- Resolutions regarding foreign missions arising from recommendations by the Missions Committee
(a) That if expansions in missions is not possible at the present, the Conference nevertheless is of the opinion that the extent of the work at present not be reduced. (b) That an increase in contributions will still be necessary, and that the delegates encourage their churches for lively support of foreign missions. (c) That the suggestion by Brother N. N. Hiebert be recommended, to print an annual booklet on foreign missions, as a means to stimulate mission activity. (d) That prayer meetings, Bible study, and special Sundays for gathering mission funds be promoted. (e) That the Conference is of the conviction that if we really want to, we can do still more for foreign missions, than we have done thus far. GCY, 1921, p. 21.
1921 -- Acceptance of the P. V. Baiters
That Brother (and Sister) P. V. Belter be accepted for missionary service and be sent out as soon as means are available (to India). GCY, 1921, p. 25.

1921 -- Acceptance of Paulina Foote
That Sister Paulina Foote be accepted as teacher for missionary children in China, as well as for other mission work. GCY, 1921, p. 26.

1921 -- Effort to increase the mission endowment fund
That the Conference delegates encourage the increase of the (mission endowment) fund-notes in that their local church is encouraged to choose members for the administrative committee (Verwaltungskomitee) according to necessity, and report this to N. N. Hiebert, the secretary, in order that the list of the administrative committee members can appear in the Conference yearbook. The duty of the administrative committee is to increase the (mission endowment) fund. GCY, 1921, pp. 26, 27.

1921 -- Needs at Indiahoma
That the matter (of supplying equipment and repairs for Indiahoma) be left to the discretion of the mission committee. GCY, 1921, p. 30.

1921 -- The matter of a mission home left to mission board
That the provision of a mission home for missionaries returning for furlough, and for the rearing of their children, be left to the Mission Board to be dealt with according to best judgment. GCY, 1921, p. 31.

1921
Note: At this time the Mission Board consisted of nine members, with a staggered term. Three were elected for 3 years, three for 6 years, and three for 9 years. The officers of the board, chairman, assistant chairman, secretary and treasurer, formed the mission committee (an executive committee), charged with all operational administration. GCY, 1921, p. 76.

1921 -- Greetings to all missionaries
That greetings with 1 John 1:3-7, be sent to all missionaries through Brother N. N. Hiebert. GCY, 1921, p. 31.

1924 -- Recommended budget for 1924-1925
(The mission committee presented a budget for the year, October 1, 1924 to October 1, 1925, which had been examined by the Mission Board (Missions-Direktorium), and which was apparently accepted by the Conference. GCY, 1924, pp. 28, 29, 30.

1924 -- Sending new workers to China
That (since the death of Missionary B. F. Wiens left a vacancy in China) the Mission Board be charged to look around for a brother, or a couple, to fill this vacancy, and when found, to have them visit the churches according to possibility, before going out (to China). GCY, 1924, p. 30.

1924 -- Mission jubilee offerings
(After a number of churches reported that they had observed a mission jubilee festival and at that occasion gathered a jubilee offering, it was decided) That we recommend that those churches which have not yet gathered a mission-jubilee offering, also do so soon after the Conference, and that all these offerings flow into the general foreign missions treasury. GCY, 1924, pp. 30, 31.

1924 -- Suggestion for a 50th jubilee commemoration of the organization of the Conference of the M. B. Church of North America in 1878
(After a reminder from the floor that 1928 will mark the 50th year since the founding of the Conference in 1878, it was decided) That the chairman (of the Conference) appoint a committee which later (at this session of the Conference) bring back a recommendation as to the manner in which we celebrate the 50th jubilee (in 1928), as well as the 400th year since the rise of
Mennonitism, and how to invest the offerings gathered in that connection. The matter was tabled until the next Conference (in 1927). GCY, 1924, p. 31.

1924 -- All missionaries to be sent out through the Board of Foreign Missions
(In answer to the question as to who sends out missionaries, the Conference ruled) That all outgoing missionaries be sent out through the Board of Foreign Missions (and upon their approval). GCY, 1924, p. 32.

1924 -- Greetings to all missionaries
That greetings with l Cor. 15:58, be sent through the secretary (of Board of Missions) to all our missionaries. GCY, 1924, p. 35.

1924 -- Appeal from the (so-called Bartel) mission in China
(In reply to a petition sent in by the Secretary, Henry J. Maier, and the Superintendent, H. C. Bartel, requesting that the four Conferences: Kriemr Mennonite Brethren, Mennonite Brethren, Mission Church, and Defenseless Mennonite Brethren in Christ, elect a joint committee constituted of 2 or 3 representatives from each conference, to assume the joint administrative and financial responsibility and furnish the mission personnel, for the (Bartel) mission "on the basis on which it was once begun by the Lord," the Conference decided) That we send the brethren and sisters of the respective mission greetings and wish them God's blessings, but that we cannot enter into additional obligations. GCY, 1924, pp. 35, 36.

1924 -- Field visit to India and China
(Regarding a field visit to India and China suggested by the South China (Fukien province) missionaries, sent in by missionary F. J. Wiens, it was decided) (a) That the churches take this matter into consideration, and send their views to the secretary of the mission committee; (b) that at the same time the respective church indicate what share it is willing to assume in covering the expenses connected therewith; (c) that the Mission Board then make a decision in the matter accordingly. GCY, 1924, pp. 3639.

1927 -- Mission treasurer's report approved
That the treasurer's report of receipts and disbursements be approved. GCY, 1927, p. 23.

1927 -- Vacation for A. J. Beckers
That Brother and Sister A. J. Becker be granted a vacation of two months, and that $75.00 per month be allowed during the vacation for a substitute. GCY, 1927, p. 30

1927 -- Resolutions regarding the South China M. B. Mission
(a) That the Conference reimburse the missionaries (in China who were robbed) to the full amount of money and property lost. (b) That Brother and Sister J. S. Dick and Sister Tina Kornelsen be returned to the field as soon as the (mission) committee deems it advisable, and it is possible for them. (c) That, under the prevailing circumstances, we approve the return to the homeland of Brother and Sister F. J. Wiens. (d) That we approve the return to the homeland of Sister Susie Richert as soon as her term expires, but that she may remain on the field if she desires. GCY, 1927, p. 30.

1927 -- Resolutions covering India mission
(a) That the repairs for the vacation bungalow (in the hills) be paid from the (mission) treasury. (b) That the building program: sisters' bungalows, for Deverakonda, $3,000, for Nagarkurnool, $3,000, for Shamshabad, $3,000; for the station Kalvakurty, $5,000; for a Bible school at Shamshabad, $4,000. (c) That for six years $3,500 be paid out annually for building purposes. (d) That a printed annual report about the work in India be approved, and that the cost be
advanced from the (mission) treasury. (e) That the Conference grant the J. H. Pankratzes the wish to remain in America for a period of years, and if possible, return to India later. (f) That the Conference joyfully responds to the sacrificial willingness of the J. H. Voths to return to India and recommends their going as soon as possible. GCY, 1927, pp. 30, 31.

1927 -- Pension fund
(In reply to a recommendation from the mission committee that a pension fund be started for the support of retiring missionaries, the Conference decided) (a) That the mission committee work out a plan according to which the accumulation of a fund can be effected, and to present it at the next (1930) Conference. (b) This motion was amended as follows: That the plan (to be worked out) by the committee, be sent to the churches (for consideration and reaction), and if approved by them, to authorize the Mission Board to start with the gathering of the fund. GCY, 1927, pp. 31, 32.

1927 -- Greetings to all missionaries
That greetings and congratulations be sent by letter to all missionaries with the Word of the Lord: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). GCY, 1927, p. 33.

1927 -- A word of comfort
That as Conference we send a greeting and a benedictory good wish to the older Brother and Sister H. Richert, and to Brother and Sister Aaron Janzen who each have lost a child (through death) on the mission field. GCY, 1927, p. 33.

1927 -- Africa mission
That the Conference take the question of accepting the Africa field to our churches for consideration; to assure the Africa workers, Brother and Sister Aaron A. Janzen, of our goodwill; and to permit them to visit our churches and receive offerings for the Africa mission. GCY, 1927, pp. 33 and 35.

1927 -- Recommendations of mission committee
That the recommendations and procedure of the missions committee (regarding budget, missionary salaries and children's allowance, operational expenses and decisions) which are in accordance with the resolutions of the Conference and of the Mission Board, be accepted. GCY, 1927, pp. 32 and 84, 85.

1930 -- Home for missionaries
(a) That the Mission Board (Missionsdirektorium) still consists of nine members elected by the Conference. The missions committee consists of the five officers, chairman, assistant chairman, secretary, assistant secretary, treasurer. The Canadian treasurer also attends committee meetings. Resolutions on foreign missions by the Conference are now practically all based upon recommendations by the missions committee.

1930 -- Regarding furloughs and final allowance of support
That missionaries who return for furlough for the first time, not receive over eighteen months' furlough with pay; and such as return for the second and third time, not receive over three years of furlough with pay. This arrangement is also to apply to those who discontinue (mission) service. GCY, 1930, p. 28.

1930 -- Home for missionaries
(a) That the Mission Board be authorized to purchase or acquire one or more homes which can be made available for residence to retiring missionaries, or if unoccupied, to missionaries on furlough. (b) To gather special contributions for this purpose ...and that loans from the mission endowment fund be used in case special contributions are slow, so as not to delay the implementation of the plan. GCY, 1930, pp. 28, 29.
1930 -- Acceptance of Sister Catharine Reimer
That, upon the recommendation of the Mission Board, Sister Catharine Reimer be accepted for mission service (as nurse) in India. GCY, 1930, p. 29.

1930-- Administration of (south) China work left to missions committee and Board.
(After H. W. Lohrenz, chairman of the missions committee, had explained how the committee had found it necessary to make Yarious changes in the [South] China work because of changed situation there, and asked what the Conference might wish to do [in China] in the future under prevailing circumstances, the Conference decided) That we approve what the (mission) committee and the Mission Board have done, and that because of the still constantly changing situation (in China) we have full confidence and leave the entire matter of regulation and decision in regard to the China work to them (the mission committee and Board.) GCY, 1930, p. 29.

1930 -- Honorarium to chairman and secretary
That the chairman and secretary of the mission committee each be allowed a remuneration of $250.00 per year for their service. GCY, 1930, p. 31.

1930 -- Representation in the (advisory) Board of Missions
That the list of members in the (advisory) Board of Missions (Verwaltungskomitee) be prepared during the Conference... that churches not represented, be represented by other churches in the nomination of representatives and that it is of great importance that each local church have at least one representative in the Board. GCY, 1930, p. 31.

1930 -- Africa Mission
(A. A. Janzen, founder) (Since the Conference was hesitant about its ability at this time to assume additional mission obligations, it was decided) (a) That the committee which has been charged to study important questions, also study this one and bring back a recommendation to the Conference floor. (b) That the secretary of the Conference send greetings to the missionaries and the native Christians with 1 Cor. 15:58. GCY, 1930, p. 33.
(c) (The committee under (a) later reported the following recommendation which was accepted by the Conference): That we (as Conference) take a position of goodwill towards the missionaries and the mission, and that we will gladly transmit contributions for this cause, but that we do not see that the time for accepting the (Kafumba) station and the responsibility (for the mission) has come. GCY, 1930, p. 43.

1933 -- Resolutions regarding India personnel.
(a) That Sister Mary Wall, whose traveling funds are on hand, again be sent to the mission field in India. (b) That since Sister Anna Hanneman's health is not yet completely restored, the time of her return (to India) be left to the Mission Board. (c) That in principle the return to India of the P. V. Baiters be approved. Since the question of Sister Belter's health has not been fully cleared, the final decision of their return be left to the Mission Board. GCY, 1933, p. 25.

1933 -- Resolutions regarding China (south field) personnel
That the Conference meet the wish of Brother and Sister F. J. Wiens and to prayerfully support them in their purpose to go back to China ... and extend to them 1 Cor. 15: 58, (for a farewell). GCY, 1933, p. 25.

1933 -- Regarding personnel on the North China (Bartel) field
(a) That the Mission Board together with the business committee prepare a recommendation to the Conference regarding the sending to China of Sisters
Paulina Foote and Helen Heppner, and Brother and Sister P. P. Balzer, since their case is outside the jurisdiction of the Conference (being they are workers of the Bartel mission), and because thus far we have not been able to grant them support out of the foreign missions treasury. GCY, 1933, p. 25.

(b) Accepted recommendation: (1) That in view of the lack of clarity regarding the situation in Borneo and China, and in view of the limited finances, the Conference would like (nevertheless) to express its respect and interest in their willingness to enter service (in China). But to send them out and support them financially is not yet possible, and therefore advises to wait and leave the matter to the Mission Board who will consult further with the sisters regarding the situation in Borneo. (2) That the Conference thanks Brother and Sister P. P. Baltzer for their cordial and brotherly report. The Conference values them and their ministry and wishes them God's rich blessings. In view of the empty treasury it grieves us, that a specific sum of support cannot be appropriated, since it is also policy of the Conference to supply its own missionaries and fields for which it is responsible, first. Should the dear Lord in his grace grant all of us better times, the Conference would then be able to deal more generously. GCY, 1933, p. 46.

1933 -- A finance committee to assist the mission (executive) committee
(On the basis of a recommendation by the temporary business committee of the Conference elected to examine the administrative structure of foreign missions with a view of suggesting some improvements, the Conference decided) (a) That in view of the difficult times present (1933), the Conference elect a finance committee of three brethren for three years to assist the mission (executive) committee by way of advice and in the loaning of endowment funds. (The Conference elected H.A. Martens, Peter Suderman, and J. D. Wiebe). (b) That this committee need not necessarily be constituted of Mission Board members. (c) That all loans from the endowment fund be approved by this finance committee. (d) That the mission treasurer and the committee prepare an annual (financial) report for the Mission Board and the Conference. GCY, 1933, pp. 27 and 46.

1933 -- Honorarium to officers (amount)
That the chairman (of the Mission Board) and the secretary each receive an honorarium of $150, and the treasurer $250 per year. GCY, 1933, p. 27.

1933 -- Establishment of the home for missionaries abandoned
(After the Secretary N. N. Hiebert explained that in view of the uncertainty and difficulty of [economic and political] conditions, the mission committee would advise to drop for the time being, the plan of establishing a home for retiring missionaries. To this the Conference agreed.) GCY, 1933, p. 28.

1936 -- First report by H. W. Lohrenz who had now served as treasurer and keeper of the current mission fund records for three years.
That since Brother Lohrenz has had much work in continuing and revising the bookkeeping records, which is worthy of Conference recognition, an adequate remuneration in the amount of that of the treasurer ($250) be allowed him. GCY, 1936, p. 23.

1936 -- Resolutions regarding India
(a) Budget and allowances. (That the following recommendation of the mission committee be adopted): To accept the missionary budget with the following changes. (1) To set up a budget dating from January 1, to January 1, but the time of the annual financial report (to the Conferences) remains October 1, to October 1. (2) That the salaries of missionaries be raised $100 per
year, single sisters $50. For missionaries on furlough the rent for housing is to come out of their salary. The salary (during furlough) to be 4/5 instead of 2/3 as heretofore, of the rate on the field. This amounts to $500 per year for a family, and $400 for single sisters. (3) The children's allowance on the field is raised to $50 per year per child below seven, and $150 from seven to eighteen. While on furlough the rates are $40 and $125. (4) The total (financial) appropriation for India is to be divided among the stations with a specific smaller amount to be for operational expenses, and the larger amount for subsidy for evangelization. ... Special contributions are to subsidize evangelization. If these do not cover the amount provided in the field budget, the balance is taken out of the general treasury; if they exceed the set amount, the surplus may be used for improvements or extension of the work on the respective station. (5) Missionaries are requested to compile their annual financial reports in terms of dollars, and also include special gifts that were sent them above receipts from the treasury.

(b) India personnel. (1) That Brother and Sister J. J. Dick, who reached our India field as fugitives (from Russia) and whose service has been acceptable, who are members of the Coaldale church and have a good standing ...be accepted for full missionary service with full salary and children's allowance beginning January 1, 1937. (2) That upon recommendation of the workers in India Sister Helen Warkentin be invited to take her furlough. The return for furlough of Sister Katharine Schellenberg who has served uninterruptedly for ten years was considered. In a letter to the chairman of the Board she, however, expressed the preference to postpone her furlough somewhat. (3) The return to India of the J. A. Wiebes was approved. In principle the return for further service of other missionaries on furlough was approved as soon as their health permits. (4) The mission committee recommended the preparation for service of Brother and Sister G. W. Peters, Sister Susie Warkentin and other young people.

(c) Expansion of India field. (1) That the purchase of Mahbubnagar from the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society be approved and a consideration of $2,500 be offered. (2) In case this does not materialize, to appropriate $1,500 for buildings at Janumpet, payable in three annual installments of $500. (3) That in case this meets with the approval of the India missionaries to sell the Hughestown property as soon as an acceptable price is obtainable ...and to utilize the proceeds for further building ...or for purchase of Mahbubnagar and for building up the stations of Janumpet and Kalvakurty ... likewise a small residence can be acquired or built in Hyderabad (city) for a rest home for missionaries who come there (for business). How to utilize the balance of the proceeds can be arranged with the mission committee. GCY, 1936, pp. 24, 25, 26, 28.

(d) That the mission committee be given free hand in the incompleted negotiations with the India missionaries regarding children's allowances. GCY, 1936, p. 28.

1936 -- Indiahoma resolutions

(a) That the salary of the A. J. Beckers be raised from $700 to $800. (b) That $400 be appropriated to make up the sum of $600 for a new chapel for the Mexican work which has grown out of the Indiahoma work, and that the $400 also come by way of special gifts. (c) That $35 monthly be allowed for the support of the Mexican preacher, Gonzales, and $5.00 for gasoline: one half to be taken from special gifts and one half from the general treasury. (d) To raise the allowance for an assistant on the (Post Oak) station from $200 to $250. (e) That
three months of vacation be granted the Beckers during the next three years. GCY, 1936, pp. 26, 27.

1936 -- Resolution regarding (South) China field
That on the basis of a letter from Missionary F. J. Wiens ... and in consultation with many of the leading brethren of the churches ... while opportunities for fruitful ministry in India are now great ... which cannot be said for a planned ministry in China at this time ... we accept this as a sign from the Lord to strengthen our work in India and occupy a waiting position regarding the endeavor in China. GCY, 1936, pp. 27, 28.

1936 -- Resolutions regarding (Congo) Africa
(In reply to a letter from Brother and Sister A. A. Janzen and the Sisters Martha Hiebert and Kathryn Willems... asking to come under Conference administration and support, it was decided): (a) That we thank the missionaries for the letter and wish them God's blessing in the work. (b) But, that the Conference is not able to meet their request, because according to latest information, the Belgian government requires (1) that there be at least four (missionary) men on the field. (2) That the mission be incorporated in Belgium as well as in America. (3) That a considerable amount (of money) be deposited (as surety) for each missionary. (4) That accepting of the (Kafumba) Congo mission is therefore not within the reach of the conference. GCY, 1936, pp. 27. 28.

1936 -- Traveling secretary for missions
That the matter of providing a deputation secretary for foreign missions be referred to the Mission Board with the assignment to bring a recommendation to the Conference. GCY, 1936, p. 29.

1936 -- Regarding pension for returned missionaries
(a) That the Mission Board be requested to work out a recommendation regarding pension for returned (and retired) missionaries. (b) That the Mission Board elect five or six brethren, present them to the Conference, and together with these, prepare a recommendation. (The following nine brethren were presented: A. P. Epp, P. E. Nickel, H. C. Flaming, H. E. Wiens, M. A. Kroeker, J. G. Wiens, D. C. Eitzen, J. A. Kroeker, Jacob Lepp). GCY, 1936, p. 29. (c) Pension recommendation: (The Mission Board together with the nine authorized brethren presented the following): (1) That missionary families entitled to pension be allowed $500 per year from the foreign missions treasury, With the provision that they visit the churches according to possibility in the interests of foreign missions: that each church gather an offering at such visits: and that the traveling expenses be paid out of the (general foreign missions) treasury. (2) That the Conference elect a committee of three brethren, who, together with the mission committee, work out a plan as to how the funds for pension can be gathered, and then carry out the plan. (3) That in order that the mission treasury not lack funds, every local church raise one offering for this purpose each year during the next three years. GCY, 1936, p. 33. (d) That the delegates from Buhler, Hillsboro, Ebenfeld and Oklahoma, each nominate a brother to be presented to the Conference for approval...and that these brethren, together with the mission committee are then to prepare a pension plan and report it to the Conference. GCY, 1936, p. 34.

1936
Note: In line with the general plan of the 1936 constitution, adopted in that year, a mission board of five members was created. The Conference elected a Board of Foreign Missions of five members. This Board organized itself as follows: P. R. Lange, chairman, H. S. Voth, assistant chairman, H. W. Lohrenz, Secretary-Treasurer, J. H. Pankratz, recording secretary, J. J.
Wiebe, member, and J. M. Elias, assistant treasurer for Canada. GCY, 1936, p. 72.

1939

Note: By 1939, the Conference depended almost entirely upon the judgment and recommendation of the Board of Foreign Missions in matters pertaining to the expanding foreign missions program. Budgets and operational details presented by the Board were adopted as a whole. Missionary candidates were accepted by the Board after personal references had been obtained and after the local church of the candidate had given approval, their sending to the field was, however, reported to the Conference. The function of the (advisory) Mission Board (Verwaltungskomitee) now had shifted completely to that of stewardship and promotion of Conference funds. Questions of principle, accepting new mission fields, and major changes in the missionary endeavor were regulated by separate Conference resolutions. The growing extent of the Conference mission program, the necessity of the times for making prompt administrative decisions in dealing with governments and foreign countries, the greater responsibilities demanded of administering boards, made it imperative to concentrate the administration of foreign missions in a Board which, though responsible to the Conference, nevertheless needed to enjoy sufficient authority to give executive direction to the great work of foreign missions the Lord entrusted to our brotherhood. It is for this development that the nature of Conference resolutions changed in subsequent years.

1939 -- Field visit to India discussed
(In reply to an invitation by the India missionaries to visit that field, the Conference decided) That upon the recommendation of the Board of Foreign Missions, on account of lack of funds, and the dangers connected with the war, an official visit to the India field does not seem possible at this time. But the Conference thanks the missionaries for the invitation, and gives them prospects that in the future, after named obstacles have been removed, the Conference may be able to comply with their wish. GCY, 1939, p. 15.

1939 -- Mission budget in summary
(a) That the following budget be accepted:

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(b) That $1,000.00 be appropriated for the purchase of the hospital at Mahbubnagar. This property joins the compound bought from the Baptists, but was not a part of our earlier purchase. The purchase is recommended by the India missionaries. GCY, 1939, pp. 23, 24.

1939 -- Africa mission accepted
That it be decided in principle, that the Conference accept the Congo (Kafumba), Africa mission (A. A. Janzen, founder). GCY, 1939, pp. 23, 24.
1939 -- Administration of China mission accepted
That the Conference decides to accept the administration and operation of the (South) China (F. J. Wiens) field and operate it on the basis that will be worked out by the (Board of Foreign Missions) committee. GCY, 1939, pp. 26.

1943
Note: In 1943 the chairman of the Board announced to the Conference that the Board of Foreign Missions had elected one of its members (H. W. Lohrenz) to serve as executive secretary and treasurer to assume full-time duties in this work as recommended by the Committee of Reference and Counsel. The executive secretary then gave a full report on the status of the M.B. Mission work, GCY, 1943, pp. 8-16.

1943
Note two: This being the time of World War II, the Board of Foreign Missions made an appraisal of the situation and presented to the Conference a report of its findings and made some recommendations which were accepted by the Conference with one modification:

1943 -- Statements and recommendations concerning foreign mission work
That with gratitude to God for blessings in past years and in complete dependence on Him for the future, the Board of Foreign Missions submits to the Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America the following statements and recommendations for the continuance of this important ministry, subject to such revisions by the Board as may become necessary by changing conditions and new developments.

1. General statements and recommendations
1. Missionaries on the fields. We give due recognition to the faith and courage with which our brethren and sisters have continued at their posts of duty on the various fields in spite of existing and ever increasing dangers. Our undivided support in intercession and other ways is pledged anew to them and the great cause in which they serve as our representatives. The Conference sends greetings to them in the words expressed by David in Psalm 2:8, "The Lord is their strength, and He is the saving strength of His people."

2. Missionaries at home on furlough. (a) We approve the return of missionaries who have come home for various reasons, and appreciate the services which they are rendering so willingly and efficiently in our churches. (b) We hope and pray that it may become possible for all, or at least for some of them, that they can go back and resume the work on their respective fields at an early date. Where this is impossible for various causes, such as the general world conditions, insufficient health of individuals, or obligations to immediate families, we invite these workers to activities here at home until such time when they can return to their stations in the foreign fields.

3. New missionaries. Realizing the need of strengthening the work on all fields, we shall continue to pray the Lord of the harvest that He send forth more laborers. We invite our young people whom God is calling into this blessed ministry and whom He has prepared with the proper qualifications for the work, that they give first consideration to our own field, and we assure them that their applications will receive a sympathetic hearing.

4. The fields. Bearing in mind the words of Jesus, "The field is the world," we would point to the following fields as offering wonderful opportunities. Some have been opened and partly occupied, others are appealing with increasing interest. (a) The great and productive field in India with more than 1,450,000 people, where whole villages are now turning from heathenism to Christianity, (b) China. Though Shanghang is still cut off and temporarily
inaccessible, the western provinces contain wide areas that are entirely unoccupied by Protestant missions. (c) Africa with the two fields in the Belgian Congo; Kafumba and Bololo with a combined population of nearly half a million. (d) South America. Although we can not yet direct our young people to a definite field on this great continent, we are asking God for definite guidance if He wishes that we enter and occupy a field in that country. (e) Opportunities in our land, such as the work among the Indians and Mexicans, neglected districts in the great Northwest, Jewish and Chinese and centers in our great cities, settlements of people of Russian nationality, etc.

5. Financial support. God has been very generous in blessing us in material ways as well as "with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." In response to this we wish to express our gratitude by bringing to Him the thank-offerings that are commensurate with the blessings which we have received. Hence the following remarks and recommendations. (a) Although some of our missionaries are now at home on furlough, let us remember that our obligations on the fields have not diminished but rather increased. The small savings in reduced salaries are more than counterbalanced by heavier traveling expenses. Be it resolved therefore that we encourage our churches, the various organizations within them, and the individual friends to continue their contributions to this work and increase them wherever possible. The opportunities of entering new fields present additional reasons why we should continue to do our best. (b) As time goes on, the demands on the "pension treasury," started in 1936, become heavier. Be it resolved therefore that we remind our churches that this is a permanent part of our foreign mission work, and that we encourage our Sunday schools to contribute regularly one offering each month to this purpose. (c) We still remember the depression which followed upon the World War of 1914-1918. At that time it became necessary to reduce the modest salary allowances of our missionaries twice 10 percent and the appropriations for the work on the field 5 percent at one stroke. Even then our treasurer found it impossible on one occasion to send any appropriations for a whole quarter so that the missionaries found it necessary to divide among themselves the few special gifts that had been received.

It is humanly unavoidable that a more serious depression will follow the cessation of present hostilities. We as a Board therefore place before the Conference this question: How can we prepare to meet the depression that will certainly come? To us it seems advisable to encourage more liberal giving while we have the means, and to form a sinking fund with the surplus by laying up a reserve and investing it in government securities. (d) We appreciate the efforts of our missionaries to bring about uniformity of appropriations between the different mission stations on any one field. This is in the interest of sound mission policy. Be it resolved that we endorse and approve the principles as expressed on this subject in the minutes of our missionaries in India at their 57th missionary conference held at Wanaparty from December 29, 1942, to January 1, 1943.

This resolution is interpreted in the light of the following statements. First, we declare our intention and willingness to support all stations of any one field, as well as the different fields, with the same liberality according to the recognized needs and our ability. Secondly, we reaffirm our established policy of respecting the expressed wishes of all contributors and will
continue to assign all special gifts to the purposes which have been designated. Thirdly, the portions of the specified amounts which are not covered by assigned gifts will be supplied from the general mission treasury. We as a Board believe that the application of these principles is fair to all missionaries and respects the rights and interests of the contributors.

6. Relief work on mission fields. Famine conditions exist today in countries in which our brethren and sisters are engaged in mission work. These will become more severe in the years immediately before us. The suffering of people of other colors and other languages move us to deep sympathy and produce in us a willingness to send relief. The board wishes to remind the churches that this has always been an integral part of our work, and desires that relief funds intended for sufferers on these mission fields be sent to their destination through our treasury for foreign missions for final distribution by our own brethren and sisters. This will differentiate clearly between work on the mission fields and work on fields that are entered definitely and primarily for relief purposes.

7. Affiliation of mission interests. The problem of affiliation of mission interests presents itself in two distinct phases. (a) There exists in this country an organization known as the Foreign Missions Conference of North America. One hundred twenty-three mission societies hold membership in it. Affiliation became necessary in 1919 because permission to enter British territories for mission purposes could be obtained only through the Committee of Reference and Counsel, a subdivision of this organization. Our board has not entered into "constitutional" membership but maintains an "affiliated relation-ship."
The Board recommends that this "affiliation relationship" to the Foreign Mission Conference of North America be continued and that the treasurer be authorized to pay the assessed contributions.

A new organization has just recently been formed which calls itself the National Association of Evangelicals. In its doctrinal position, this will undoubtedly be more sympathetic to our conception of the religious life. It is recommended that we observe developments and that we support the movement without definite affiliation. Among the services that may be derived through such an organization may be mentioned the following: (1) Representation before the government in matters of passports and visa; (2) assistance in obtaining transportation; (3) advice in making remittance of funds to foreign countries. The organization renders many other valuable services. (b) Eliminated.

II. The mission in Africa

1. The Conference instructed the Board of Foreign Missions and the Committee of Reference and Counsel in 1939 to work out a plan upon which mission work in Africa could be accepted. This has been done, and the plan was submitted to the churches through the Zionsbote. It contains certain principles which are of vital importance for this purpose. (a) The joint committee did not deem it advisable to look for an entirely new field but rather considered the two fields Kafumba and Bololo in Congo Belge upon which some of our brethren and sisters work who draw their main support from our churches. (I, 1.) (b) It was thought to be very essential on the one hand that there should be unrestrained willingness in the churches for such acceptance; and on the other hand these missions should have complete confidence in the Conference so that they would place themselves unconditionally under its supervision. (I, 7.) (c) The plan provides for the acceptance of both of these fields without discrimination although it was not thought necessary that this take place simultaneously. (II, 2.) (d) After
the acceptance has taken place, the mission will be supervised and cared for according to the stipulations in the constitution and the resolutions of the Conference. In supplying the stations with workers and material means, due care shall be exercised that this be done with adaptation to the conditions as they exist on the field. (III.)

2. The Kafumba mission. The missionaries of the Kafumba Mission, in a letter to the Board dated December 29, 1938, and signed by A. A. Janzen, Martha Hiebert, Kathryn Willems, Martha Manz and Anna Goertzen, petitioned that the Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America take over this mission, and offered to transfer to the Conference unconditionally all rights and privileges thereof. In a letter of July 25, 1940, they reaffirmed this petition and offer on the basis of the plan prepared by the Board and the Committee of Reference and Counsel in their joint session of April 5, 1940, and the following days. On the basis of this petition, and in agreement with the aforesaid plan, the Board of Foreign Missions recommends: (a) that the Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America accept as its own the Kafumba Mission in Congo Belge, Africa, with all the rights and privileges pertaining thereto, and that it assume the full responsibility for the maintenance and further development thereof. (b) That the Conference accept as its missionaries to Africa those workers who now are laboring on that field or are at home on furlough, namely Brother Aaron A. and Sister Martha Janzen, Sister Kathryn Willems, and Sister Anna Goertzen.

3. The Bololo mission. The Africa Mission Society, through its Board of Directors, has presented to the Board of Foreign Missions several communications dated November, 1936, October, 1938, and March 11, 1943. In these they likewise petition that

the Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America take over the Bololo Mission, and they declare further that they are willing to transfer the mission to the Conference under certain conditions. Or if this cannot be arranged satisfactorily, they ask for the establishment of a basis upon which they can function side by side with the existing mission organization of the Conference.

(A discussion followed. The following motion carried): That in view of the fact that the Conference delegation is not ready for a final vote on the motion (to accept the Bololo mission on the same basis and for the same purpose as the Kafumba Mission) under consideration ... the discussion discontinued here ... and resume the discussion and take a final vote on the motion tomorrow. GCY, 1943, pp. 21-25.

1943 -- Kafumba field accepted
(Next day) That in view of the fact that the financial support for the Kafumba field has largely come out of our circles, the Conference accept the Kafumba field in accordance with the recommendations of the Board of Foreign Missions. GCY, 1943, p. 27.

1943 -- Acceptance of the Kafumba budget
That the $5,500 budget for 1944 be accepted. (The Bololo budget was not ready for presentation. The matter was left to the mission board.) GCY, 1943, pp. 27, 28.

1943 -- Bololo held accepted
That the M.B. Conference of North America accept the Bololo mission from the African Mission Society and thereby take over full responsibility for this field. GCY, 1943, p. 27.

1943 -- Adoption of (document)
"Statements and recommendations concerning foreign mission work." (GCY, 1943, pp. 21-25)
That the document be accepted (by the Conference) with the elimination of point b under paragraph 7, (GCY, p. 24). GCY, 1943, p.

1943 -- India budget resolutions
That the following be accepted: (a) Salaries, married missionaries in service, $1,000 first term; $1,200 subsequent terms. Single workers one half that amount. On furlough, $900. Single workers, one half that amount. Retiree missionaries, $600. (b) Dearness allowance: Missionaries in service, $200 (per year); those on furlough, $125. (c) Children’s support up to 6 years, $40; 6 to 18, $125 each. (d) Creation of an emergency fund of $1,500 to cover unexpected occasions of illness, death, and unforeseen events. (e) Total for operational expenses on the India field, $19,900. GCY, 1943, p. 26.

1943 -- Indiahoma budget
That $3,750 be appropriated for the Indiahoma budget. GCY, 1943, pp. 26, 27.

1943 -- New (West) China field accepted
(a) That since the closing of the field at Shanghang where Brother and Sister F. J. Wiens labored for which the means are still on hand... which is a part of China not occupied by Japan ...and since it would not conflict with the reopening of the former field... the Conference open a new field in western China. (b) That Brother and Sister P. P. Balzer of Hillsboro, Kansas, be sent to western China as soon as the Lord leads and opens the way. GCY, 1943, p. 27.

1943 -- Work among Chinese on (U.S.) West Coast
That the Mission Board be empowered to give prayerful consideration to a field of missionary work among the Chinese on the Pacific coast and proceed as they feel the Lord leads. GCY, 1943, p. 27.

1943 -- Western Children's Mission (Canada)
(a) That we recommend the Western Children's Mission to our churches and in a special way to our churches in Canada. (b) That we recommend the appropriation of $500 out of the general mission treasury for the Western Children's Mission. GCY, 1943, p. 29.

1943 -- South American missions
That the Conference enter upon mission work in South America if the Lord opens the way. GCY, 1943, p. 29.

1943 -- Paraguay mission
(a) That the Conference enter into closer relationship, on the cooperative basis, with the Paraguay mission among the Lengua Indians in the Chaco, but (request) that that mission retain the responsibility for the administration. (b) That we (M.B. Conference) appropriate $500 support for 1943. (c) That we encourage missionaries to go into that work. GCY, 1943, p. 29.

1943 -- Principles for evangelization on foreign fields
(a) That the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church has assumed the duty of bringing the Gospel of salvation to the heathen, in accordance with the command of Christ as given in Matthew 28: 19. (b) That our missionaries have endeavored to spread this Gospel and to make known the plan of God as manifested by God through Jesus Christ. (c) That all other phases of the missionary endeavor are subordinated to this main purpose and shall only serve to further the salvation of souls among the heathen. (d) That in accordance with the example as set by our Lord and Master, our missionaries also have sought access to the hearts of men through channels that were most accessible to them, namely: The children through instruction in schools, the sick through the channels of medical care in hospitals and the others through contacts on the streets and in the homes. (e) That the committee of world missions is convinced that the school and hospital work are important factors in the
program of evangelization. (f) That it is also our sacred duty to keep our God-sent workers physically fit for their duties by creating wholesome conditions for them. GCY, 1943, p. 72.

1945

Note: After the decease of Dr. H. W. Lohrenz on March 16, 1945, the Board of Foreign Missions, with the approval of the Committee of Reference and Counsel appointed A. E. Janzen, on April 15, 1945, to become acting executive secretary and treasurer. Janzen was elected into the Board of Missions by the Conference on November 25, 1945, and continued to serve as executive secretary and treasurer. The new executive secretary-treasurer presented a report to the Conference on the state of M.B. Missions, on Africa, China, India, North America, and South America (GCY, 1945, pp. 9-16), a financial report covering the years 1943, 1944, 1945, (pp. 17, 18), and presented the recommendations by the Board for the next Conference interim (pp. 24-26).

1945 -- Paraguay Indian mission
That the Conference accept (full responsibility) for the Indian mission in Paraguay on the basis of the plan submitted to the various churches (by the Board of Missions) for consideration. GCY, 1945, p. 24.

1945 -- China mission
That the Conference accept the so-called Bartel Mission in China, both the old field in Shantung Province as well as the new field in Kansu Province; details for the operation of this work to be worked out by the Board of Foreign Missions together with Missionary H. C. Bartel and the officers of the China Mennonite Mission Society. GCY, 1945, p. 24.

1945 -- Africa mission extension
That the Conference purchase several (orphaned) stations if available near our fields, provided the work done on these stations has been reasonably within our Confession of Faith and provided the acquisition of such stations will strengthen the field as a whole. GCY, 1945, p. 24.

1945 -- Brazil mission
That the Conference (a) accept the mission work started in Brazil (at Curitiba) by Rev. and Mrs. Jacob Unruh (of Dinuba) and supervise, support, and promote it together with the M.B. Churches in Brazil. (b) Accept and support the Unruhs as duly appointed missionaries to South America, and (c) that the Board of Foreign Missions work out a plan on the basis of which the Brazil mission work can be operated. GCY, 1945, p. 24.

1945 -- Salaries of missionaries
(a) That the basic salaries of missionaries in Africa, India, North America remain the same, but that the allowance received while on furlough be raised to the same level received when at work on the field. (b) That the allowance for children up to six years inclusive be doubled (to $100). (c) That in the allowance for children above seven years, the age be extended from 18 to 21 inclusive. (d) That the allowance for retired missionaries be raised proportionately to the allowance received by missionaries on furlough (to $66.66 per couple per month). GCY, 1945, p. 25.

1945 -- Educational aid to missionary candidates
(a) That the Board of Trustees (of the Conference) work out a plan and create a fund which is available to help ministerial students as well as accepted candidates for missionary service to finance their education. (b) That during the interim in which the Board of Trustees is working out plans and creating a fund, the churches be asked to raise by a special collection or/and accept special gifts and send them to the treasurer of the Mission Board for the purpose of granting financial assistance.
to acceptable missionaries now in school needing financial aid, and to encourage local churches to underwrite their missionary students through the Board of Foreign Missions. GCY, 1945, p. 25.

1945 -- Office building, (Conference)
(a) That the Conference provide an office building for Conference activities and for the fireproof storing of valuable Conference documents and literature at an estimated cost of $15,000 to $20,000, to be located at Hillsboro, Kansas. (b) That in view of the pressing need to provide living quarters for missionaries on furlough or retired, and for missionary children while attending school, the Board of Foreign Missions recommends to the Conference the erection of a suitable building or buildings. (c) That the Conference go on record to encourage our brethren and sisters who in gratitude to the Lord feel led to do so, to leave gifts, legacies, and memorials for this purpose. GCY, 1945, pp. 25, 47 par.3.

1945 -- Mission budget
That the recommended budget be accepted with the provision that the Board of Foreign Missions have the liberty to make adjustments where deemed necessary:

Africa $42,484.96;
China, $20,668.80;
India, $99,751.11;
North America -- Canada, $6,586.96;
Indiahoma, $5,851.63;
Lawton, $2,937.28;
Los Angeles, $1,839.68;
South America - Colombia, $21,111.14;
Paraguay, $6,734.20;
Pension treasury, $2,583.34;
Administration, $9,000.00.

Total budget for 1945 $137,927.87.
Total for 1946, $219,549.10.
GCY, 1945, pp. 25, 26.

1948 -- Report and financial statement, and greeting
That the report of the Executive Secretary and Treasurer of Foreign Missions be accepted: (a) General Survey, (b) Objectives, (c) Future outlook, (d) Financial report, (e) Budget of $252,119, (f) That greetings be sent to all missionaries. GCY, 1948, pp. 13, 30, 38-39.

1948 -- Increase of budget in view of open doors
That in humble obedience to the great commission of our Lord and Master to go and disciple all nations, and in view of the open doors in foreign fields and in areas not yet touched with the saving Gospel, and recognizing that the Lord of the Harvest is still calling our young people into foreign mission service, and in order to keep the sacrifices for foreign missions abreast with the growth of the Mennonite Brethren Conference ... that during the next Conference interim of three years, the budget be advanced to $275,000 annually. GCY, 1948, p. 39.

1948 -- Extension
That the previous motion ... include that any extension ordered by the Conference be automatically added to the budget. GCY, 1948, p. 39.

1948 -- Field visits
That in answer to repeated requests from the missionaries on the fields, and in order to promote the welfare of the entire work of foreign missions ...the Conference ... deems it advisable that same member of the Board of Foreign Missions visit our foreign mission fields in the near future. GCY, 1948, p. 39.

1948 -- 50th Jubilee of M.B. mission in India
That in this 50th year of our mission work in India, a jubilee program be held on the 31st of October (1948) in all of our churches with a jubilee offering, to commemorate the heroic and divinely inspired task of foreign
missions initiated by our faithful and mission-minded forefathers in 1898. GCY, 1948, pp. 39, 40.

1948 -- Japan M.B. mission authorized
That the Conference authorizes the Board of Foreign Missions to proceed to investigate the advisability of opening a mission in Japan. GCY, 1948, p. 40.

1951 -- Acceptance of 1951 reports on foreign missions

1951 -- Renewed intercessory concern
That a renewed intercessory concern in and the implementation of a constant prayer ministry be made at home in behalf of extending the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ to people in spiritual darkness. GCY, 1951, p. 56.

1951 -- Increase of contributions
That in view of a world situation which emphasizes the urgency to "work while it is day for the night cometh when no man can work," the churches of the Conference strengthen their foreign missions offerings to a full $300,000 annually during the next Conference interim. GCY, 1951, p. 56.

1951-- Pension treasury
That churches which are not using the five cents per month per Sunday School pupil plan, or have made some other provisions by means of which to gather the pension money, cover their pension participation by one offering for this purpose once a year. GCY, 1951, pp. 56, 57.

1951 -- Spiritual work in Europe
That the spiritual work in Europe or any part of Europe designed to assist existing, or give rise to permanent (new) Mennonite Brethren congregations, be placed under the auspices of the Board of Missions, and that a certain annual appropriation be set aside in its budget for this purpose, and that gifts from churches or friends coming in for spiritual work of this nature in Europe be received to cover such appropriation. GCY, 1951, p. 57.

1951 -- Vote of gratitude
That the delegation expresses its gratitude to Brother A. E. Janzen, for his visit to the mission fields (India, Africa, Brazil, Paraguay, Colombia). GCY, 1951, p. 57. That the Conference thanks Brother H. K. Warkentin for visiting foreign mission fields at his own personal expense and for his contribution to the field in India (building a church for the nationals in Kalvakurty village). GCY, 1951, p. 58.

1951 -- Further board visits to mission fields
That the Board (of Missions) be granted the privilege to undertake further visits to the mission fields according to needs. GCY, 1951, p. 57.

1954 -- Acceptance of 1954 reports
(After a written triennial report was given by the executive secretary and treasurer [AEJ] as follows): (a) General, Growth of Believers in Numbers, Extended School Effort, New Fields, Regarding the Africa Missions, Missionary Children's School, Other Fields, Movement of Missionaries, Building Activity. (b) The Fields, Africa, Brazil, Colombia, India, Japan, Mexico, Paraguay, Indiahoma. (c) Conference Office Building. (d) Visits to Three Fields (J. B. Toews to Africa, 1952), (G. W. Peters to Colombia, 1953), (A. E. Janzen to Old Mexico, 1953), (e) Expansion
of Deputation. GCY, 1954, pp. 73-78.
(The following resolution was passed by the Conference): That with deep gratitude for the increase God has given, for the efficiency with which the Board has administered the work, their report (be) accepted gratefully. GCY, 1954, p. 92.

1954
Note: Brother J. B. Toews, who had come into the mission administration as deputation secretary on December 3, 1953, gave a brief oral report on his work in the churches in behalf of foreign missions. GCY, 1954, p. 92.

1954 -- Acceptance of the budget
That the estimated annual budget for the coming Conference interim be accepted as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Budget Allocated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa, 8 centers, 62 missionaries</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil, 1 center, 4-6 missionaries</td>
<td>9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia, 3 centers, 20 missionaries</td>
<td>55,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador, 1 center, 2 missionaries</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe, 3 centers, 5 missionaries</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India, 9 centers, 42 missionaries</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan, 3 centers, 12 missionaries</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico, 3 centers, 8 missionaries</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay, 4 centers, 23 missionaries</td>
<td>13,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.A., 3 centers, 13 missionaries</td>
<td>21,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous -- Building on fields, equipment, study in Belgium, Travel to fields, transfers, unforeseen</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General and Transfer accounts</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overhead, Administration and Maintenance</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New missionaries</td>
<td>26,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>440,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1954 -- Acceptance of new fields
That with gratitude we endorse the action of the Mission Board and the Committee of Reference and Counsel, and that we officially now accept the fields presented in the (Mission) Board's report ... namely: That our Conference (a) Furnish and support a missionary and his wife capable of taking charge and broadcasting the German gospel programs transmitted over radio station HCJB, "The Voice of the Andes," located at Quite, Ecuador, South America. (b) The permanent work in Europe begun 1952, Germany and Austria, which in September, 1954, had the first Mennonite Brethren baptismal service held at Neuwied, Germany. (c) The Mennonite Brethren church at Piedras Negras, Coahuila, Mexico, staffed entirely by and composed of Mexican believers. (d) The evangelization of the Moro Indians of the Chaco of Paraguay with whom contact was first attempted in 1949 and evangelization was first attempted in 1953. (e) The H. C. Billington (deceased) Mission adding to our India field the Makhtal and Narayanpet Telegu areas upon Rev. Billington's request and recommendation of our India missionaries. GCY, 1954, pp. 76, 92.

1957 -- Conference resolutions on foreign missions
Note: Since Brother J. A. Harder, Mission Board chairman, was ill, Brother G. J. Baerg, vice-chairman, introduced the work of foreign missions. Brother G. W. Peters, in the absence of the recording secretary, Brother Lando Hiebert, read a report of the Board's work. GCY, 1957, pp. 22, 23.

1957 -- Greeting to Brother J. A. Harder
That a brother from the Conference be appointed by the chairman to bring personal greetings to Brother J. A. Harder ... (and) that the greeting be made more personal by sending a member of the Board of Foreign Missions with the greeting from the Conference. GCY, 1957, p. 23.

1957 -- Greetings to our missionaries
That the resolutions committee be instructed to prepare a statement of greetings from the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America in session at Yarrow, B. C., to our missionaries on the foreign fields, expressing our appreciation and pledging our support of their work. GCY, 1957, p. 23.

1957
Note: At the September 21-26, 1957, meeting of the Board of Foreign Missions, the Board submitted a change in the Mennonite Brethren Conference constitution to the committee on constitution (1957 Board minutes. p. 111) which provided that Mennonite Brethren Foreign Missions be administered by an "Administrative Secretariat" consisting of the several secretaries appointed by the Board from time to time. This change in the constitution was accepted by the Conference in October, 1957. The Board organized the secretaries to serve in the following capacities in the "Administrative Secretariat": A. E. Janzen as Executive Secretary-Treasurer; and J. B. Toews, as Deputation Secretary, and assigned the field correspondence and supervision of certain areas to the executive secretary, and certain areas to the deputation secretary. (1957, October, Board minutes, p. 133). The triennial report on foreign missions at the 1957 Conference was presented by the executive secretary-treasurer, in the name of the "Administrative Secretariat" under the following headings: General, Spiritual Harvest, Threefold Effort Emphasis, Production of Bibles and Christian Literature, Movement of Missionaries, Visits to the Fields, New Fields, Building Activity, Relocation of Post Oak Mission, Personnel and Stations,

1957 -- Acceptance of reports
That the report be accepted with gratitude.

1957 -- Acceptance of budget
That the present budget be adopted for the next Conference interim:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Centers</th>
<th>Missionaries</th>
<th>Disbursements ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>96,933.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>18,170.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>36,200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8,660.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14,716.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>83,570.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25,319.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>19,690.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2-19</td>
<td>16,605.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10-1</td>
<td>16,192.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buildings and Projects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>80,300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General, Traveling to and from Fields, Transfers, Administration, Maintenance, Overhead</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>52,100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>473,455.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GCY, 1957, pp. 40, 41.

1957 -- Provision for budget increase
That the present budget be adopted for the next Conference interim with the provision of increase. GCY, 1957, p. 40.

1957 -- Progressive foreign missions budget
That the budget for foreign missions be allowed to increase at the rate of 10 percent per year during the next Conference interim. GCY, 1967, p. 40.

1957 -- Lawton View Mission
That negotiations be renewed with the Southern District in regard to taking over Lawton View Mission and build it into a church of the district. GCY, 1957, p. 40.

1957 -- Post Oak Mission
That the Board of Foreign Missions be authorized to approach the Southern District Conference with a view of working out a basis upon which to incorporate Post Oak Mission, Indiahoma, Oklahoma, with all of the institutions and assets into the southern district as a regular Mennonite Brethren Church. GCY, 1957, pp. 40, 41.

1957 -- Grand Forks Mission, B.C.
That those assets still owned by the General M.B. Conference in property at Grand Forks, B.C. be donated and transferred to the Canadian Mennonite Brethren Conference. GCY, 1957, p. 41.

1957 -- Residence of missionaries on furlough
That in order to encourage missionaries to live within the district or province of their home church, the respective district or province be asked to furnish the missionary, especially families, with housing and utilities during furlough time. GCY, 1957, p. 41.

1957 -- Length of term of service
That the normal length of a term of service on the foreign fields be reduced from seven to six years, and that deviations from the normal length necessitated by climatic conditions be regulated in the "Guiding Principles and Field Policies" of the Board (of Missions). GCY, 1957, p. 41.

1957 -- Statement of General Mennonite Brethren Conference position in Foreign Missions
That the missionary ministry of the Mennonite Brethren Church from its inception was a spontaneous expression of its scriptural faith and devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ in which the responsibility for the ministry to a large extent was assumed by the missionaries called out of their midst and the churches at home constituted the praying and supporting background of those who went out into the field. That part of the church at home through its appointed Board was to watch carefully over the spiritual qualifications of those whom the Lord called out and appointed to the ministry abroad, leaving to the individual missionary the greatest share of the responsibility for the method of work, pattern of program, and standards of accomplishment. The administrative structure limited itself to the coordination of the various mission interests in order to assure the workers on the field the needed support.

The extension of our mission program has continued to be largely of a spontaneous character without a careful study of fields, pattern of work tried in respective fields or an effort to establish a directive program and strategy for the missionaries who were sent out. The general philosophy of missions called for men and women who would go out "to bring the gospel to the millions who are lost" not requiring the acceptance of directives or established standards to follow. The spiritual motivation of an obedience to our Lord's command constituted practically the inclusive requirement for the task.

The status of our missionary program up to this day corresponds to the above stated philosophy which is true in its motivation, sincere in its efforts and sacrificial in its devotion, consecrated in its support on the part of the constituencies. The major emphasis rested in the responsibility "we must win the lost for Christ."

The world-wide revolutionary changes of the post-war era effecting every phase of the international, national, social and religious life of our generation exert a severe testing upon the missionary accomplishment of the past and its program for the future. The impact of the changes establish beyond question that the time of a fixed routine pattern of mission program to continue for decades has passed. The station-centered mission program has outlived itself. The assignment of a missionary for a stationary ministry of evangelism with a lifetime to continue in the same place as the central figure of a perpetual program results in a reactionary protest of the nationalistically-conscious native of all lands. With the growing international rejection of all colonial imperialism there has also arisen a principal rejection of the "missionary centered" gospel ministry.

The effect of the above-given observations on our missionary program of today are far-reaching and demand considerable adjustments for the future in the area of our missionary approach and administrative direction. The qualifications for missionaries of the new era in many respects differ from those of the past.

Methods of field operation
and measurements of accomplishments also are undergoing revision. The distinct standard of accomplishment of our day requires an operational administrative policy which is more concentrated than that of the past. The major emphasis does not limit itself only to the point of outreach but rather the establishment of an indigenous church which can assume the responsibility for the evangelization of its own constituency even though the missions may be required to withdraw. With the church-centered emphasis the responsibility of the evaluation of the work cannot be left to the individual missionary alone but must be assumed by the corporate judgment of the missionaries on the field together with the Board and the church at home. Periodic administrative visits to the field by members of the Board and administrative staff have therefore become a necessity. To meet our charge of the missionary assignment, we must be prepared under God to effect some changes in our methods of administration at home and on the field. It requires new standards of qualifications of missionaries and will demand new methods in some areas of work. A hesitancy on our part to consider such needed changes may result in a loss which will far exceed the values which we hope to preserve by avoiding the required adjustment. The Board of Missions together with the missionaries on the field are deeply conscious of the responsibility that rests upon them in these days of changes. Every effort is being made to find the needed light and direction that under the guidance of the Lord we may meet the challenge before us. The Board covets the special intercessory prayer of our Conference for its difficult responsibility. It invites the assistance of brethren from our constituency who under the Lord can help in bringing light in the many important matters involved. The Board would also covet the sympathetic understanding on the part of our churches if some changes in personnel would have to be effected to assure a most fruitful ministry on the various fields. Knowing that many of the leading brethren of our Conference together with us have been conscious of the stated developments, the Board would greatly appreciate any statement of direction from the Conference for the future discharge of the most sacred responsibility of bringing Christ to the millions of the unevangelized countries while it is yet day. A sympathetic response to the above presentation led the Conference delegation to accept the above statement as Mennonite Brethren Conference position and policy in our future foreign missions method and principle. GCY, 1957, pp. 41, 42, 43. 1957 -- Financial support of returned missionaries That when the Board of Missions feels that it needs additional guidance in regard to financial support of missionaries who are forced to retire from service on account of broken health or some other unforeseen circumstances, that it consult with the Board of Reference and Counsel and jointly present a recommendation to the Conference. GCY, 1957, p. 44. 1957 -- Loans from Board of Trustees That the Conference authorize the Board of Trustees to make loans available to the Board of Missions up to $16,000 to meet emergencies as stated above (viz. funds needed upon short notice and in summer months ...when mission receipts are low). GCY, 1957, p. 119. 1957 -- Greetings to our missionaries (That greetings be extended as follows:) The General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America in session at Yarrow, B.C., Canada, in its 47th
convention extends its Christian greetings
to our missionaries serving the "Lord of the
Harvest" in the foreign fields and to the
native church with Joshua 1:9, "Have not I
commanded thee? Be strong and of good
courage; be not afraid, neither be thou
dismayed; for the Lord thy God is with thee
whithersoever thou goest."
We thank our Heavenly Father for entrusting
to us this great work with open doors and
opportunities for world evangelism, and for
the souls won to Jesus Christ. "Faithful is he
who calleth thee, who also will do it" (1
Thess. 5:24).
We thank the Lord and express sincere
gratitude to the willing workers for their
sacrificial service on the fields and while on
furlough, and pray that the grace of God will
enable and sustain them in
every experience.
As a Conference, we pledge our united
support of our missionaries in the spirit that
"... we are laborers together with God" (I
Cor. 3:9). May God's presence and richest
blessings be with you continually. The letter
is also to contain greetings to the national
workers.
The Conference (through resolutions
committee, John E. Friesen, John Pankratz,
1960
Note: In 1959, Brother J. B. Toews became
the general secretary of M.H. Foreign
Missions, chairman of the Administrative
Secretariat, and handled the field
correspondence of Africa, Europe, Japan,
Ecuador. A. E. Janzen continued as
treasurer, and handled the field
correspondence of India, Brazil, Paraguay,
Indiahoma, and Indonesia. Brother John
C. Ratzlaff, who had joined the Mission
staff on June 1, 1958, became the secretary
of the administrative secretariat, and handled
the field correspondence of Mexico and
Colombia, and assumed most of
the deputation work. The official titles of the
three members of the administrative
secretariat as of January 1, 1960 were, J. B.
Toews, general secretary, John C. Ratzlaff,
assistant general secretary, A. E. Janzen,
treasurer, in which office he continued to
serve until August 1, 1960. Brother P. J.
Funk was added to the staff as secretary of
finance and took over the responsibility of
the treasury. Brother Marion Kliewer who
entered service on the Mission office staff
on August 1, 1955, on half-time basis, in
charge of publication of mission literature
and news, preferred to work on the
"employee" basis until 1960. Board
of Missions, Minutes, March, 1958, p. 152;
March 12, 1959, p. 252; February 20, 1960,
pp. 351, 352.
1960 -- 1960 Conference reports
At the 1960 (Centennial) Conference,
Brother J. B. Toews, as general secretary,
presented the reports in the name of the
administrative secretariat, under the
headings: General, Brazil,
Colombia, Republic of Congo, Europe,
India, Japan, Mexico, and South
Texas, Paraguay, Status of K.M.B. Mission
Program -- Pent, North Carolina and
Tennessee, Inter-Mission Ministries,
Mission Personnel, Present Requirements in
our World-wide Gospel Outreach, Board of
Foreign Missions Publications, Our Charge
and Our Response, Personnel of
the Mennonite Brethren Church Foreign
Missions, Principles and Policies, Merger of
K.M.B. and M.B. Foreign Missions. GCY,
1960, pp. 48-68; 75-80; 81-82.
And A. E. Janzen, as outgoing treasurer,
presented the Financial Statements for the
years 1958, 1959, 1960. GCY, 1960, pp. 68-75. While Brother P. J. Funk, the newly
appointed Secretary of Finance, presented
the budget as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>$29,320</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo</td>
<td>138,600</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>47,190</td>
<td>19,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>10,306</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>29,240</td>
<td>28,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>106,155</td>
<td>18,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>36,635</td>
<td>4,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>13,170</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Texas</td>
<td>10,860</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>19,800</td>
<td>13,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>12,900</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensions</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration Office</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputation</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing and Publicity</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>44,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Missionaries</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Aid</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve for future pensions</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature production</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unforeseen</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-Missions</td>
<td>31,000</td>
<td>93,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>578,776</strong></td>
<td><strong>671,776</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1960 -- Budget and increase accepted
(a) That the budget as presented be accepted, and (b) that the budget for foreign missions be allowed to increase at the rate of 5 percent per year during the next Conference interim. GCY, 1960, pp. 99, 100.

1960 -- Statement of Acknowledgement and Commitment
That in recognition of the many blessings and responsibilities in the area of foreign missions which God has bestowed upon us ... the following statement of acknowledgement and commitment (be adopted):
In grateful acknowledgment of God's boundless grace and mercy extended to our brotherhood in the history of the first century of our existence; and
In consideration of the trust extended to us in the wide-open doors to respond to the world commission of the risen Lord to evangelize the world; and
In consideration of the large brotherhood of believers in other lands who have joined us at a Mennonite Brethren Church: and
In consideration of the great spiritual urgency of our day to complete the assignment of Christ to "preach the Gospel to every creature," be it resolved:
(a) That the Mennonite Brethren Church on the occasion of its centennial Conference renew its dedication to the sacred assignment of the world evangelization committed to the church by our risen and ascended Lord Who calls us "to finish His work; "
(b) That the task of evangelism be carried out in closest cooperation with the sister churches which God has raised up through the witness of the Gospel in other parts of the world and who have joined us as a Mennonite Brethren Conference;
(c) That the Board of Missions be charged to expand the program of world evangelism in the scope of Conference direction with renewed strength to meet the responsibilities arising from the spiritual crisis of our day and to redeem the unprecedented opportunities for world evangelism which God is giving us in this hour of history and that special attention is to be given to the following areas of service:
1. To assume renewed responsibility in the field of pioneer mission work to reach the multitudes of millions who up to this day have never heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. To labor in closest cooperation with existing national churches and conferences to establish the work through the training of national workers, development of leadership and reaching out into adjoining areas not yet evangelized.
3. To consider the open door for the Gospel in South America as a special opportunity to be given central consideration in mission strategy for the coming Conference interim.
(d) That we as a brotherhood on this occasion of our centennial Conference pledge ourselves to renewed faithfulness in intercessory prayer, faith and sacrifice of finances and lives as a continued response to the commission of Christ: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:18, 19, 20). GCY, 1960, pp. 96, 97.

1960 -- Financial provision for Congo evacuation of missionaries
That because of the serious Congo emergency created through the political unrest demanded the evacuation of all except one couple of our mission personnel, and the current budget provisions for the operation of the program are insufficient to
cover the demands of expenses arising from such circumstances, and
Since the needs not provided in current budgets which require adequate provision for the following are:
(a) Expenses incurred through the evacuation from the Congo to Angola, Europe, and America of 34 adults and 36 children,
(b) Special rehabilitation allowances to missionaries who have returned and whose re-assignment at the present cannot be visualized,
(c) The heavy losses sustained by the treasury through the devaluation of the Congo currency.
(d) The assistance to our missionaries to replace their personal effects and household equipment where such cannot be withdrawn from the Congo and the high cost of transportation which makes the shipment of such articles to the homeland inadvisable, and
(e) The necessity of re-locating the mission personnel who in Limited number eventually may be returned to assist the national church in the continuation of the Gospel ministry in that land. (It is foreseen, that a number of the present mission centers will need to be transferred to the occupation of the national believers and that mission quarters will need to be established in larger population centers; the cost of which re-location under present emergency circumstances being extremely high),
That, in consideration of the given demands which may require an emergency appropriation from $40,000 to $60,000, the Board of Missions ...be provided for the stated need from the Mission Endowment Fund in the form of a special appropriation to be replaced through a continued contribution to this fund from the constituency of the brotherhood. GCY, 1960, pp. 97, 98.

1960 -- Residence of missionaries on furlough
(That to the provision made for missionaries on furlough... as adopted by the 1957, General Mennonite Brethren Conference,... in order) to meet special circumstances, the following provisions be added:
(a) That a church or district be absolved from the responsibility of making such (as the 1957) provisions when the following circumstances arise:
1. Where missionaries find it expedient to establish their residence away from their home church and district,
2. Where the missionaries accept employment and have an income in addition to the furlough allowance.
(b) That where missionaries are required to live away from their home churches for the purposes of gaining additional educational preparation for their service on the field under the direction of the Board of Missions, that the Board reach an agreement with the home church in regard to the arising needs.
(c) That in cases where churches or districts face undue financial obligations to make such provision because of considerable missionary concentration, it be their privilege to present the arising circumstances to the Board of Missions and reach an agreement with the Board as to the portion to be carried by the home district and church and the general treasury of the Board of Missions. That in such circumstances, however, the local church retain the privilege to make provision for their missionaries in the area of their home constituency. GCY, 1960, pp. 98, 99.

1960 -- Shortening the name of the Board
That in consideration of the changing world circumstances, and in consideration of the co-labor relationship of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America with the Mennonite Brethren Churches in other lands, the Board of Foreign Missions...
change the name from "The Board of Foreign Missions of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America" to "The Board of Missions of the Mennonite Brethren Church." GCY, 1960, p. 154.

1960 -- Resolution showing Conference gratitude for the long and faithful service of Brother A. E. Janzen in the area of foreign missions
The General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church in session at Reedley, California, at this centennial convention wishes to extend a word of appreciation to Brother A. E. Janzen for his long term of service in the area of foreign missions. Brother Janzen assumed the responsibility for the administration of Conference foreign mission work after the passing of Rev. H. W. Lohrenz in 1945. The Conference has been keenly aware of the devotion and sacrificial service of our brother during these past fifteen years. During this period our mission program has made rapid progress and has indeed become a world-wide ministry to lost souls. While Brother Janzen's more recent work has been related primarily to missionary finances, he has, nevertheless, been vitally interested and concerned with the entire program and personnel. While Brother Janzen is retiring from the more active participation in the secretariat, we trust the Lord will sustain him for many more years as he continues to labor in the area of writing and compiling missionary literature. We express our appreciation for his devotion and service in the words of the Apostle Paul as found in 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3: "We give thanks to God always for you... making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." GCY, 1960, pp. 94, 154, 155.

1963
Note: After the chairman, Brother P. R. Lange, had introduced the report of the Board of Missions by reading Phil. 1:1-3, he called on Brother G. W. Peters, the recording secretary, to read the written report of the Board under the headings: The Organization of the Board, Changes During the Past Three Years, The Meeting of the Board, The Concerns of the Board, The Gratitude of the Board... which was accepted by the Conference. GCY, 1963, pp. 57-61.

1963
Then Brother J. B. Toews, general secretary of M.B. Missions, presented the triennial report on foreign missions in the name of the administrative secretariat, entitled "Obedience in Partnership" under the headings: A Message from the Board of Missions, The Ministry of the Missionaries, In Memoriam, The Ministry of Administration, Out-reach With Our Sister Conferences, Japan, India, Europe, Congo, Thrust Into Latin America, Paraguay, Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Panama, Mexico, Latin American Church, Inter-Mission Ministries, World Radio Missionary Fellowship, Missionary Aviation Fellowship, Sudan Interior Mission and Evangelical Alliance Mission, Our Opportunity and Our Trust. This report was accepted. GCY, 1963, pp. 61-84 and 91.

1963
Following the above two reports, Brother P. J. Funk, secretary of finance, presented the Triennial Financial Statement and graphs, which were accepted. GCY, 1963, pp. 84-90.

1963 -- Budget accepted
That the following budget be accepted:

1964 Budget
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Salaries</th>
<th>Oper.Exp.</th>
<th>Projects</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
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<td>$45,625.00</td>
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<td>TEAM</td>
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<td>5,362.00</td>
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<td>Sudan Interior Mission</td>
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<td>11,650.00</td>
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<td><strong>262,397.87</strong></td>
<td><strong>236,373.30</strong></td>
<td><strong>71,100.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>569,871.17</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Other Expenses:

- Social Security: 7,000.00
- Pensions: 7,000.00
- Maintenance: 2,500.00
- Administration: 50,000.00
- New Missionaries: 25,000.00
- Medical Aid to Mission: 4,000.00
- Exchange Charges: 28,000.00
- Unforeseen: 25,000.00
- Board Meetings: 1,800.00
- Educational Aid: 1,500.00
- Sum. School of Missions: 3,000.00
- Ca. Investm. on Fields: 18,000.00
- Film Production: 5,000.00
- Literature: 15,000.00

**Total 1964 budget**: **767,671.10**

GCY, 1963, pp. 119, 120.
1963 -- Budget Rate of Increase
That to discharge our financial responsibility in the missionary outreach in the face of inflationary trends and continually rising costs... the Conference adopts an annual 5 percent increase over the 1963 budget of $740,523. The adoption of the 5 percent annual increase over the period of three years, 1964-1966, results in the following annual budgets for the next Conference interim: 1964-$777,550; 1965-$816,420; 1966-$857,241. GCY, 1963, p. 119.

1963 -- Concerning Shorter Furloughs
That in consideration of the changing circumstances of world missions demanding closest integration of mission personnel with the national church; and, in consideration of the need for the continuity of the ministry within the framework of the national church avoiding prolonged absence of workers in the "partnership" with the national church; and, in consideration of the means of transportation making it possible for most of our missionaries to return home in less than 24 hours... the Board of Missions is authorized to negotiate with the missionaries and churches involved to find the best solution possible in this matter. GCY, 1963, pp. 118, 119.

1963 -- Outreach to Mohammedans
(a) That the Mennonite Brethren Conference accept the responsibility of extending the gospel of salvation to the Mohammedans as part of a missionary trust. (b) That the Conference authorize the Board of Missions to pursue a careful study of the issues of involvement, degrees of need and possible areas where such a ministry could be most effectively initiated. (c) That the Conference approve the entrance into the Middle East, specifically Jordan, if the study of needs and opportunities now in progress reveals circumstances in which we can recognize the call of God. GCY, 1963, p. 118.

1963 -- Enlargement of Board of Missions
That in the light of an ever-enlarging program of Missions of the Mennonite Brethren Church and in consideration of the need to share the responsibility for the administration and operation of this program with a larger group of brethren in the brotherhood, and in order that the Board of Missions be enabled to organize itself into effective working commissions for distribution of responsibility to achieve greater efficiency in the promotion and operation of the mission program... the Conference... enlarge the Board from the (1960) constitutional number of nine to thirteen members. GCY, 1963, p. 94.

1963 -- Representation of the Board of Missions
That the Board of Missions recommendation... "that the membership of the enlarged Board be representative in relation to geographic and Conference areas, i.e. U.S.A.: Pacific, Central, and Southern districts--two members each; Canada: British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario at least one member each; that representation be selected from the ranks of pastors, ministers, lay brethren and our two Conference theological institutions of advanced standing, Mennonite Brethren Bible College and Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, which are assigned to the responsibility of specialized training of personnel for this world-wide program" (GCY, 1963, pp. 94, 95) be reconsidered... (to read as follows): "That there be six U.S.A. members, two from each district, on the Board, and six Canadian members, with provincial conference representation, with one member elected at large... and, that there be two non-voting, consultative members on the Board representing the two theological schools." GCY, 1Y63, p. 115.
1963 -- Statement of greeting, exhortation and renewed commitment

That the following statement be adopted... and sent to our world-wide brotherhood:

1. Statement of gratitude. The General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church expresses deep gratitude to God for His blessings upon the missionary outreach of the brotherhood in obedience to the commission of the crucified, risen and ascended Christ. The churches and groups of believers which have resulted from the ministry of the gospel stand there as tokens of God's grace and mercy. The Conference sends greetings to our sister churches in India, Japan, Europe, Congo, Colombia, Mexico, Brazil, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Indonesia with the words of Paul the Apostle: "Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; being confident of this very thing that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:2-6).

2. Fellowship in mutual edification. The Conference acknowledges, in deep gratitude, its spiritual oneness in Christ and recognizes the inward affinity which binds us to our sister churches abroad. They have been called out from the world to a spiritual fellowship of believers which supercedes all national loyalties and extends beyond racial divisions. We recognize ourselves as one brotherhood of the Mennonite Brethren Conference international, with Christ as our head and we His members. To nurture our spiritual fellowship in Christ and with one another, we propose to send brethren from our churches to the fellow believers in other lands for a ministry in the Word and in return welcome brethren from sister churches abroad, such contributions in spiritual ministry to be considered for shorter and longer periods of time.

3. Obedience in partnership. As Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches of North America we propose a united obedience to the missionary assignment of Christ in a program of partnership in opportunity and responsibility to extend the message of salvation to the multitudes of our generation who have never heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Such obedience in partnership is to be visualized through the following channels: (a) Through the creation of mission committees in the M.B. churches and conferences to stimulate mission interests in a more vital expression of our responsibility regarding the commandment of Christ to preach the gospel to every creature (Matt. 28: 19, 20; Luke 24:46-48). (b) Through the recruitment of personnel from churches to join the ranks of missionaries sent to other lands with spiritual under-girding and financial support from their home constituency. (c) Through a general active responsibility for financial resources to extend the outreach of evangelism around the world.

4. Obedience in identification. To be effective in the obedience of partnership in evangelism and edification, we recognize the importance of the Biblical principle to express our spiritual affinity in mutual identification which rises above the level of cultural and economic differences. "I am made all things to all men that I by all means might save some" (1 Cor. 9:22). Our missionaries in various parts of the world, who serve as co-laborers with our sister churches, we exhort that they identify themselves with our fellow believers by integrating into the structure of the local fellowship as members of the respective churches and remove all differences of rank and position.

5. Our commitment of obedience. In response to the trust of God, who has called
His church for the purpose of evangelizing the world, we call upon the sister churches in various parts of the world to assume greater responsibility for the financial support and spiritual direction of the program in their own localities in order to free mission personnel and resources for the extension of the gospel to other areas. The Conference instructs the Board of Missions to proceed in the formulation of a definite program which will lead to the reduction of subsidies for the maintenance and support of existing spiritual fellowships around the world in order to channel these resources into the wider expansion program to reach other people who have not yet heard.

In obedience to the missionary call of our Lord we wish to clasp hands with our sister churches abroad in partnership of dedication to the great work of training a witnessing church to extend its message to the people round about that the body of Jesus Christ can soon be gathered and the return of our Lord hastened. GCY, 1963, pp. 95, 96.

1963 -- Vote of thanks to mission personnel
(a) That the Conference give a vote of thanks to the brethren A. E. Janzen, J. B. Toews and John C. Ratzlaff for the ministries rendered in the home office, and to the following missionaries who, in recent years, have retired from active service in the mission field: John H. Lohrenz, Brother and Sister P. V. Belter, and the Sisters Mary Wall, Helen Warkentin, Margaret Suderman and Anna Suderman. They have served the Lord in India, giving the major part of their life to the work of the Lord in India and representing the Conference on that field.
(b) That the conference commit itself to faithful intercession for the brethren and sisters in the home office, our missionaries and sister churches and groups of believers in our various mission fields. (c) That our Conference send greetings to our missionaries and sister churches in the various countries of the world, encouraging them to be bold for the Lord, steadfast in their faith, united and zealous for the Lord, whose soon return we are awaiting. (d) That the Conference chairman request some brethren to present the cause of missions, in the name of the Conference, unto the Lord in fervent intercession. GCY, 1963, p. 120.

CITY MISSIONS
1907 -- Creation of a committee on city missions
Note: (a) The following were nominated for a committee on city missions: J. J. Kliwer, chairman; N. N. Hiebert, secretary; Jakob E. Dick, treasurer. (b) This committee was given the assignment to look for contributions, for workers for a city mission service, and for a suitable location. (c) A resolution was adopted that since Sister Elizabeth Neufeld and Brother P. C. Hiebert are expected to do some work in city missions, that the matter be allowed to rest for this year (1907-1908). (Apparently the committee remained in force). GCY, 1907, pp. 378, 379.

1908
Note. In 1908, Brother J. J. Kliwer, chairman of the committee on city mission reported about city mission work in Hurley, Wisconsin, and why the work in Minneapolis had not been undertaken, and that Brother and Sister B. F. Wiens and Sister Katharina Klassen had been engaged (to labor at Hurley). This report was approved. GCY, 1908, p. 391.

1909
Note. In 1908, the A. A. Smiths had started city mission work in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The committee on city missions had provided them with some support from special contributions. This was reported to the Conference in 1909. GCY, 1909, p. 414.
1909 — Minneapolis city mission accepted by the Conference

(a) That the Conference approve the continuation of the Minneapolis city mission, and request the churches to gather one special offering for city missions (per year). GCY, 1909, p. 414. (b) That the committee be permitted to engage the A. A. Smiths (as workers) to the extent the treasury permits. GCY, 1909, p. 416.

1912

Note: In 1912 a report of the work in Minneapolis and the treasurer's report was presented. In 1909, attention of the Conference was drawn to the need of city mission in Winnipeg. (GCY, 1909, p. 417). This need was repeated in 1912. The Conference took note of it, but in the discussion decided that expansion in city missions was not possible at this time. GCY, 1912, pp. 438, 439.

1915 — Ordination of A. A. Smiths and Tina Klassen

That Brother and Sister A. A. Smith and Sister Tina Klassen be ordained (for city mission service). GCY, 1915, pp. 461, 462.

1915 — Sister Anna Hiebert. accepted

That Sister Anna Hiebert be engaged to serve in the (Minneapolis) city mission at the regular compensation of $250 per year. GCY, 1915, p. 462.

1915

Note: Brother David Dyck (Canada) explained how the Northern Conference had been led to open the Winnipeg mission, and how this matter (of final support) had been deferred to this (1915 General Conference), and that the churches (in Canada) had instructed their delegates to request the Conference to reduce their (financial) obligations toward Minneapolis city mission. Brother John Berg (California) related that the Pacific district also has a city mission where there is likewise a need for a chapel, but that the churches on the West Coast have instructed their delegates to support the Minneapolis city mission (of the General Conference). GCY, 1915, p. 463.

1915 — Effort to build a chapel for Minneapolis city mission

That the committee on city missions appeal to all our churches, to see whether it would be possible to gather sufficient funds to construct a chapel (for Minneapolis mission). (It was also reaffirmed that one half of the Thanksgiving Day offerings has been designated for [Minneapolis] city mission). (Cost of chapel estimated at $5,000.) GCY, 1915, p. 463.

1915 — Conference sympathetic towards district city missions

(To obviate a scattering of effort in city missions, and to unify Conference city mission endeavors, a committee was asked to deliberate over this matter. It brought back to the Conference floor the following recommendation, which was accepted): That in regard to the Thanksgiving Day offerings (in the churches) the Conference rules that wherever possible, these offerings be designated for Minneapolis city mission. Wherever this is not practicable, that the churches nevertheless do not forget the (Minneapolis) mission, and support it with special offerings, so that this endeavor, which was once begun by the Conference and which has proved to be of blessing and promise, may be continued with blessing in the future. Aside from that, the Conference
takes a most sympathetic position towards the city mission efforts of the Northern Conference in Winnipeg, and the Pacific Conference at Bakersfield, and wishes them God’s blessings in the endeavor, and does not wish in any way to hinder the support of these causes. GCY, 1915, pp. 462-464.

1919

Note. The Conference accepted the financial report of the current treasury of the Minneapolis city mission by J. E. Dick, treasurer, for the years 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, as well as the report covering the newly constructed chapel and wing at a cost of $16,537.22. GCY, 1919, pp. 486, 487.

1919 — Recognition to J. E. Dick and A. E. Dick

That the Conference accept the treasurer’s report and to thank Brother Dick for his service, and (in appreciation) allow Brother A. E. Dick (who worked on the chapel for one hundred days) $300 for his labor. GCY, 1919, pp. 487, 488.

1919 — Salaries stipulated

That the salary of Brother and Sister A. A. Smith be raised to $1,000 (per year), and that of the Sisters Tina Klassen and Anna M. Hiebert to $400. The salary of Sister Tina Pauls to $350. GCY, 1919, p.488.

1919

Note. It was being reported that the work started in Winnipeg may turn into a city mission, and that city mission work is being done in Portland, Oregon, and Bakersfield, California. Though the delegates expressed their delight that this ministry is expanding, the consensus was that the Conference should preserve unity and not over-expand its interest and means in this direction. GCY, 1919, pp. 488, 489.

1919 — Support of Minneapolis city mission reaffirmed


1921 — 1921 city mission resolutions

(a) That the committee be authorized to draw on additional (voluntary) help (to assist Brother A. A. Smith), but that the Conference does not favor the employment of more personnel for the time being. (b) That the salary of Sister Tina Pauls be raised from $350 to $400. (c) That the resignation of Sister Tina Klassen be accepted, and that she be allowed one-half salary for another year. (d) That the (mission) residence be improved to meet housing regulations. (e) That the members of the committee be elected by nomination and ballot (with a view of various district representation). (The result of the election was: H. S. Voth, Northern district; A. J. Wiebe, Central district; D. D. Hiebert, Southern district). (f) That a word of thanks be expressed to the committee that served during the past three years; (g) That a hearty greeting be sent to the mission workers, with 1 John 1:3-7, through the secretary of the committee on city missions, and to wish them God’s blessing. GCY, 1921, pp. 83, 84.

1921 — Regarding Winnipeg city mission

(After sentiment in favor of accepting the Winnipeg mission as a Conference work was expressed, and a consensus of the discussion favored that the churches
consider this matter during the interim with a view of a decision at the next (1924) conference, a resolution was passed: (a) That we recommend to our churches in the States to gather an offering on Thanksgiving Day (as heretofore), and a second offering for the city mission in Minneapolis, and a third offering for the city mission in Winnipeg. (b) And that the churches in the Canadian district be requested to support the city mission in Winnipeg in accordance with their decision, and to gather one offering for the city mission in Minneapolis. GCY, 1921, pp. 84, 85.

1924 — 1924 Resolutions for city missions

(a) That the present workers in the (city) mission be engaged again at the same salary. (b) To appropriate funds for improvements of the buildings. (c) To appropriate travel funds so that Brother (A.A.) Smith can visit the churches as much as possible to stimulate interest for the city mission. (d) That the committee is allowed to engage additional help according to need. (e) To thank the mission workers and the committee for their ministry. (f) That we reaffirm the resolution of 1921, p. 34, “To recommend to our churches in the States, to gather on Thanksgiving Day, or if no services are held on that day, to do this on the following Sunday, one offering, and a second offering to go for the city mission in Minneapolis, and a third offering to go for city mission in Winnipeg. And to request the churches of the Northern District Conference to support the city mission in Winnipeg in line with their decision, and to gather one offering for the city mission in Minneapolis.” GCY, 1924, pp. 41, 42.

1927 — 1927 Resolutions for city missions

(a) That the present personnel (A. A. Smiths, Anna M. Hiebert, Tina Pauls) be again engaged to serve. (b) That funds be appropriated for minor repairs. (c) That since the needs of the Smiths require it, to allow $50.00 annually for each child. (d) That Brother Smith do some deputation work in the interests of the mission. (e) That the committee is free to call in additional help according to need. (f) To thank the committee and the staff for their toil and labor, and send them greetings. (g) And to repeat our resolution of 1924, p. 42, regarding support of city missions. GCY, 1927, pp. 37, 38.

1930 — City mission resolutions of 1930

(a) That Brother and Sister A. A. Smith and Sister Tina Pauls be engaged for another three years. (b) That the committee for city mission be authorized to engage help to fill the vacancy created by the leaving of Sister Anna M. Hiebert Ross. (c) That the Conference authorize minor and major repairs on the buildings. (d) That Brother A. A. Smith undertake some visits in the interests of the city mission. (e) That the Conference allow the committee to engage a second couple to serve on the staff if the treasury permits. (f) That the Conference abide by resolutions of 1924, page 47 and 1927, page 38, in regard to offerings for city missions. (g) That the term of the members be raised to nine years, and be staggered so that one member be elected at every (triennial) Conference session, and that at this (1930) Conference the election by nomination and balloting be carried out so that the member with the highest number of votes serve for nine years, the one with the next highest for six, and the next for three years. GCY, 1930, p. 37.

1933

Note. The committee on city missions had engaged Sister Tina Dahl to fill the vacancy
left by Sister Anna M. Hiebert Ross.

1933 — City mission resolutions of 1933

(a) That brother and Sister A. A. and Martha Smith be engaged for another three years at the same salary received during the past three years. (b) That the Sisters Tina Pauls and Tina Dahl also be engaged, at the same salary as in previous years. (c) That only the necessary repairs be made on the buildings as needed. (d) That churches whose districts maintain a city mission gather only one offering, and that churches whose districts have no district city mission, gather four offerings a year for the city mission of Minneapolis. GCY, 1933, p. 31. Note. Since a number of districts had begun to operate city missions under the administration of their home missions, or a district city missions committee, the question was raised on the Conference floor as to whether Minneapolis city mission should not also become an activity of the district. GCY, 1933, p. 31.

1936 — City mission resolutions of 1936

(a) That Brother and Sister A. A. and Martha Smith and the Sisters Tina Pauls and Tina Dahl be again engaged to serve at the same salary for another three years. (b) To provide the necessary repairs for the buildings. (c) That offerings in the churches be gathered as provided by the previous (1933) Conference. GCY, 1936, p. 32. Note. From the floor the sentiment was voiced that the Minneapolis city mission should become an organized church. GCY, 1936, p. 33.

1939 — City mission resolutions of 1939

(a) That Brother and Sister A. A. Smith be engaged for another three-year term as missionaries and leader of the Conference city mission in Minneapolis. (b) To engage at moderate compensation a young couple suited under prevailing circumstances and conditions to assist in the work. (c) That the established offerings be continued by churches in the future: namely, quarterly in the southern and central districts, and once annually in the northern and Pacific districts. GCY, 1939, p. 41.

1939 — Recognition extended to retiring city mission staff and board members

(a) That we extend to the Sisters Dahl and Pauls, who are leaving the work, our word of thanks for their service, and express our recognition in allowing each $100 from the city mission treasury. (b) That we are grateful to the Lord that He has held us as Conference worthy to minister by means of the Minneapolis city mission. We think of the ministry of Brother and Sister A. A. Smith. May the Lord perfect 1 Cor. 15:58 in them. To the Sisters Tina Pauls and Tina Dahl we extend Romans 16:1 and 2 as a word of farewell. May the Lord also reward the committee for their ministry in behalf of this mission. May God especially bless the retiring members, the Brethren A. J. Wiebe and D. D. Hiebert. GCY, 1939, p. 42.

1943

Note. After the leaving of the Sisters Tina Pauls and Tina Dahl, the committee on city missions had engaged Brother and Sister Ruben I3aerg while they were studying for three years at Northwestern Schools, to labor part time together with the Smiths. The Baergs were followed by the Herman Warkentins who served for a brief interim.

1943 — City mission resolutions for 1943

(a) That because of ill health of Sister Smith and upon the advice of her doctor, the
Conference grants Brother and Sister Smith a furlough of one year with a remuneration of $900, and (authorizes) the committee to find workers to fill the vacancy. (b) That Brother and Sister Melvin Schimnowski who have assisted in the work since February (of 1943) be appointed assistant workers for a period of three years, with a remuneration of $70 per month. (c) That the churches of our Conference support the mission financially as heretofore. (d) That the churches of our Conference obligate themselves to support this branch of our Conference with their prayers. GCY, 1943, p. 79.

1945 —Vote on turning the Minneapolis city mission over to the districts postponed until 1948

That the motion to take a vote by ballot to get the sentiment of the Conference as to whether it would wish to turn the city mission over to a respective district or districts in which it is located, was tabled till the next (1948) meeting of the Conference. GCY. 1945, p. 31.
Note. The Schimnowskis served until August 17, 1945. They were followed by Brother and Sister George Martens. The committee of city missions consisted up to November 27, 1945, of David Hooge, chairman; G. W. Lohrenz, secretary; and B. B. Fadenrecht, treasurer. The election in 1945 resulted in a new committee of the following Brethren: Waldo Wiebe, chairman; Dan E. Friesen, secretary; and H. E. Wiens, treasurer. GCY, 1945, p. 125.

1948 —Regarding transfer of city missions to districts

(a) That the sentiment of the Conference (is) in favor of turning the city missions” over to the respective districts (in which they are operating). (b) That we support the work of city missions by free-will offerings as we have been doing, until the support is taken over by a district or districts. GCY, 1948, pp. 52, 53.
Note. The above two resolutions affected the “South Side Mission” in Minneapolis, at which Brother and Sister Chester Fast were in charge at the time; and ‘The Gospel Witness to Israel” in Winnipeg, where Brother and Sister J. J. Pankratz were serving. The Conference elected the Brethren Dan E. Friesen, Waldo Wiebe, and J. A. Toews, into the committee on city missions. GCY, 1948, p. 53.

1951 —Winnipeg Jewish (city) mission

(a) That the work among the Jewish people in Winnipeg continue. (b) That Brother and Sister Jacob J. Pankratz continue to serve us as our Conference missionaries to the Jewish people. GCY, 1951, p. 110.

1951 —Minneapolis South Side Mission

(a) That the Conference express appreciation to Brother and Sister Chester Fast (for their service). (b) That the Conference continue a city mission program in Minneapolis. (c) That Brother and Sister Harry Beier of Tampa, Kansas, be appointed as our city missionaries in Minneapolis. (d) That the Conference give the new city missions committee the privilege of disposing of the present property and erecting such building or chapel as would meet the need, be more practical (than the old) for the work and more economical to operate. (e) That the Conference continue to gather the funds on the same basis as in the past. GCY, 1951, pp. 110, 111.
Note. The Conference elected the Brethren J. A. Toews, A. H. Ewert, and J. P. Kliewer into the city missions committee.
1954 —Continuation of city missions by the Conference (for the time being)

(a) That the ministry of our city missions in both fields, Winnipeg and Minneapolis, be carried on in the future and that our churches remember this work in earnest prayer and intercession. (b) That the Canadian Conference assume the responsibility for the work among the Jews (known as The Gospel Witness to Israel) in the city of Winnipeg. This would also include the transfer of the property which the Conference now owns in that city. (c) That the South Side Mission in Minneapolis be taken over by the three district conferences in the U.S.A., and that the three members of the board be members of the Central District Conference. (d) That the said districts continue to gather funds on the same basis as heretofore for the support of the mission. (e) That we (U.S.A. districts) contribute enough money to the city mission treasury to take care (also) of the A. A. Smith pension and ask the city mission board to administer the same. GCY, 1954, pp. 136, 137.

1957 —Transfer of city missions to districts completed

(At the General M.B. Conference held in 1957, the chairman of the Central District Conference, Brother G. S. Warkentin, reported as follows: At their 1956 convention the Central District Conference declared itself willing to assume full responsibility for the South Side Mission in Minneapolis, Minnesota, provided, the Southern and Pacific Districts would release the property of the South Side Mission to the Central District. At their 1956 conventions the Southern and Pacific Districts voted to give the release. The operation of what used to be the South Side Mission but is now the Mennonite Brethren Church of Minneapolis was transferred to the Board of Home Missions of the Central District Conference in February of this (1957) year. We are happy to state that the church in Minneapolis is doing well and progressing. The transfer of the property is now in the hands of the Board of Trustees.) That the report be accepted with thanks, and (that) the Conference herewith thanks the Board (of city missions) for their work which they have ably completed. GCY, 1957, p. 105.

HOME MISSIONS

1878 to 1888 — Home missions

From 1878 to 1888 the Conference regulated the home missions endeavor on the Conference floor each year. This endeavor consisted in (a) Promoting evangelism throughout all the M.B. churches, (b) Approving certain qualified brethren for this service, (c) Assigning time-schedules to the various churches, and to the brethren serving as evangelists. (d) Gathering offerings for the Conference treasury to support this work. (e) Paying the evangelists and traveling elders a certain amount per year or month, and paying their traveling expenses. (f) And hearing reports of the work at each annual convention of the Conference. GCY, 1879 to 1888.

1889 —Conference appointed a committee to work out a plan of procedure in home missions

(a) That a committee be elected by the Conference which is to prepare an evangelization schedule for the various churches, suggest the evangelists and their compensation, and present the plan (to the Conference) for approval. (b) That the elders ask some brethren to assist them (this group to be the committee) in working out a plan,
and then submit it at the next (business) session. GCY, 1889, p. 84.

1889 —Elected committee reported its plan regarding home missions

(The special committee elected by the Conference to study the method and manner of spiritual nurture and evangelization within the Conference reported the following): (a) Evangelization. That if means permit, the engagement of two evangelists is necessary for the whole Conference. These could, with guidance from the churches, conduct revival services wherever there are open doors, whether within the constituency or outside of our churches. If there be unused funds left, additional brethren be engaged by the month. (b) Spiritual care (Seelenpflege). That, according to the command of our dear Lord, elders have the first responsibility to feed the sheep and the lambs, which (ministry) requires more than merely preaching on Sundays. The care of church members requires much of the elder’s time, and since, according to Scripture, the ministers who dispense spiritual food are entitled to material sustenance, it would be necessary that the elders be first provided with, say, $100 to $200 per year, according to circumstances and the amount of work. It would be well to remit these church contributions to the Conference, and that the Conference control the disposition (of these funds). The special contributions in question would be designated especially for evangelism and for spiritual care (support of elders), in order that at (subsequent) Conference meetings there need be no further pro and con discussion, even when the one (general) treasury is low in funds, the other treasury need not be affected thereby. Both treasuries could be conducted by the same brother, who would transmit the funds to the respective committee. (c) Stations. That if a station does not have less than 50 members, and has talent able to teach, as well as willingness and means to support an elder, in that case such station may be organized into a (local) church. That if we are agreed and willing to proceed in a regulated manner, it would not be difficult for us to pray to be granted faithful brethren with the necessary gifts, and the support would also be easily forthcoming. Should our churches not accept this (plan), we still believe that herewith we are providing a plan toward which our treasuries should aspire in order to save the Conference difficult work in the future. Herewith we are placing our recommendation at the feet of our Lord, and before the church (Conference) for consideration, yet with the prayer to God that the well-being of our church and the honor of the Lord might be promoted thereby.

The above report was accepted to be adopted at the next Conference. It should also be noted that there now were two distinct treasuries: (1) The foreign missions, and (2) the treasury for spiritual care and evangelism. The latter being the forerunner of the home missions treasury. GCY, 1889, pp. 89-91.

1890 — Wedel called to evangelization in home missions

(a) That Brother P. H. Wedel devote his calling to evangelism. (b) That the Conference refund to the school association the amount invested in Wedel’s education at the rate of $150 per year. (c) That Brother Wedel be allowed $100 for his evangelization service during summer vacation. GCY, 1890, pp. 101, 102.
1890

Note. Various other brethren were assigned to spiritual care ministry and others to evangelization. GCY, 1890, pp. 105, 106. GCY, 1891, pp. 115, 116.

1891 — Treasury for support of spiritual care

That contributions toward spiritual care (elder support) made by local churches be left to their own disposal. GCY, 1891, p. 122.

1892 — Local church to decide rate of elder support

(a) That each local church decide how much support to allow its own elder (preacher) and that the Conference review this matter next year. (b) That where local funds are insufficient, the Conference assist from the general treasury. GCY, 1892, p. 137.

1893 — Evangelization in Saskatchewan and Manitoba

(a) That $100 be allowed for (evangelism) work in Manitoba... and leave the engagement of an evangelist to the church (there). (b) That $30 be allowed as a monthly salary to Brother G. Wiebe to visit Saskatchewan. (Reports and approval of work in the various other churches were accepted). GCY, 1893, p. 151.

1894 — Evangelism in Oregon

(a) That (since Brother P. H. Wedel plans to make a visit to Russia) he be released and allowed $200 from the treasury. (b) That the balance of the funds be distributed among the various fields and that Oklahoma, Manitoba and Saskatchewan be remembered first. (c) That Brother J. J. Regier work for the Lord in Oregon for two months and be compensated with $150, traveling costs included. (Other fields were allotted workers and funds). GCY, 1894, pp. 163, 164.

1895

Note. The term “Innere Mission” (home mission) appears first in the report of 1896, p. 182. During the period from 1895 to 1901 the Conference heard reports of the work by the evangelists and from the churches, made allotment of workers and funds, which were accepted by the Conference. GCY, 1895, pp. 173, 174; 1896, pp. 181-184; 1897, pp. 195, 196; 1898, pp. 204-206; 1899, pp. 212-214; 1900, pp. 221-224; 1901, pp. 236-238.

1902 — Change in method of assigning evangelists and funds

(a) That the salary and traveling expenses (of an evangelist) be treated separately in order to be fair to the appointed (preacher) brother, as well as to the contributors of mission funds... That, therefore, the traveling costs be estimated at the Conference, and funds for the same be reserved in the treasury. After the evangelist has made his trip, he sends the bill to the treasurer who pays it. Should the treasurer not have sufficient funds in reserve, in that case the Conference repays whatever amounts and expenses he has advanced (from private funds). (b) That the annual salary of our evangelists be set at $450 plus traveling expenses, and if serving less than a year, at $30 per month plus traveling costs. (c) That the chairman of the Conference appoint a committee to prepare a schedule recommending the names of evangelists and the places they are to serve, and present this plan at the afternoon session. GCY. 1902, pp. 261, 262.
1902 —The above temporary committee

To work out an evangelization schedule reported back to the Conference. Taking into consideration the numerous wishes of the churches, the committee proposed a schedule, assigning the evangelists and allotting the time to the various churches over the Conference. Any subsequent regulation of the matter during the year to be left to the standing committee on home missions. The schedule was reported to and approved by the Conference. GCY, 1902, pp. 262, 263.

1902 —Creation of a permanent advisory committee on evangelization in the churches

That all leaders of churches and stations in the future constitute an advisory committee (vorberatendes Komitee) which at the time of the preliminary session of the Conference takes into consideration the requests from the churches for evangelists, and the places where work is desired, and then prepares a plan to be presented by the home missions committee to the Conference. GCY, 1902, pp. 263, 264.

1903

Note. The reports about evangelization in the churches during the past year were accepted. But the advisory committee created in 1902 reported that it was unable to present a schedule of work for the ensuing year due to the lack of a sufficient number of evangelists available for the entire year. Therefore a smaller committee of six members was appointed to work out the schedule (accordingly). GCY, 1903, pp. 276-278.

1904

Note. The home missions work was approved. The assignment of evangelists and the allotment of time and funds was done by the advisory committee as before, but the Conference decided that Brother N. N. Hiebert (who was in demand for evangelization work) devote his entire time as traveling missionary, visiting all the churches, in the interests of foreign missions. GCY, 1904, pp. 298-308.

Note. Home missions ordered as in previous years. 1905, pp.326-332.

1906


1906 —Home missions report as usual, but Conference expanded in home missions

(a) That since Dallas and Portland, Oregon, are asking for a full-time evangelist...Brother P. C. Hiebert be engaged with a full year’s salary . . . with the understanding that in case Brother Hiebert be sent as missionary to India, he be released voluntarily. (b) (Since a number of families have moved from Oklahoma to Michigan, and are asking for help) That Brother Abr. Richert visit the group . . . and be allowed $70.44, traveling expenses included. (c) That E. Zahorodny serve for one month among the Russian Brethren and sisters at Balfour, North Dakota. (d) That J. F. Harms work among the Russian people in Saskatchewan, with $45 compensation, traveling expenses included. GCY, 1907, pp. 353-356.

1907

Note. Brother M. M. Just, secretary of the
committee on home missions presented a report, and a schedule of work was presented by the committee. GCY, 1907, pp. 366, 367, 374, 375.

1908

Note. In 1906 the Conference decided to draw up a constitution that would include regulations for all Conference activities. This constitution was presented to the Conference in 1907, and finally adopted in 1908. It included regulation of home missions (Innere Mission) by the following provision: Leadership. Home missions is to be under the direction of a committee of three brethren: chairman, secretary, and treasurer. One of the members is elected at each annual Conference for three years… The committee, under the leadership of the chairman, is to gather accurate information about the status of home missions, to assist in expanding the same, and to present the needs to the Conference, and is also to find the necessary workers and recommend them to the Conference. Constitution, 1908, paragraph 3, “Home Missions.”

1908 — Work among Russians in North Dakota and Saskatchewan

(Because of the great interest among the delegates, free-will contributions were received during the noon intermission for evangelization among the Russian people which amounted to $139 and the Conference decided) That the $139 be turned over to Brother J. F. Harms as support for work among the Russians in North Dakota and in Saskatchewan. GCY, 1908, p. 393.

1909

Note. The report by the committee on home missions and by the evangelists was accepted. Since it was agreed in 1909 that the Conference meet only every third year, the home missions endeavor was delegated to the district conferences. GCY, 1909, p. 419.

1909 — Home missions delegated to the districts

(a) That M. M. Just serve as secretary of the committee on home missions until the committee is dissolved through the expansion of the Conference (into districts). (b) That since there is to be no Conference next year (1910 to 1912), the home mission endeavor be regulated so that every district has its own home missions treasury and home missions committee. (The delegates of the various districts met to effect the following provisional arrangement): (1) That the northern district meet at Herbert, (Sask.), in June or July.. . (2) That the central district meet in Minnesota .. . (3) That the southern district meet at the Ebenezer (M.B.) church, Buhler, Kansas. (4) (In each case the district delegates elected a home missions committee of three members, designating a chairman, secretary, and treasurer.) (c) That the funds which may be on hand at the end of the Conference year be equally divided among the three districts. GCY, 1909, pp. 419, 420.

1912 to 1919

Note. During the years 1912 to 1919 no reports on home missions appear in the General (M .B.) Conference records. This endeavor had been delegated to the districts since 1909. But, in order to achieve a more systematic report of the home missions endeavor of the district conferences it was decided: *
1919

*That all secretaries of the committees on home missions of the various district conferences constitute a committee of which Brother W. J. Bestvater serve as main secretary. GCY, 1919, p. 504.

1921 — Statistical report on home missions

(a) That the Conference request Brother (W.J.) Bestvater to send in his statistical report (on home missions done in the churches of the districts) before the Conference yearbook is printed. (This report did not yet appear in 1921 since the churches had not sent in their reports to the statistician). (b) That this (home missions) committee continue, and gather statistical information (on home missions — the work of the churches in the districts). GCY, 1921, p. 53.

1924 — Statistical report on home missions and on compensation to evangelists

(A request came from the floor that the statistical report on home missions which was not yet on hand, be obtained and included in the Conference yearbook). (a) That the Conference desired the continuation of this service (a report on the work by the churches in the districts) and that Brother W. J. Bestvater serve another three years. (b) That no home missions evangelist of a district Conference be engaged by another district conference before first conferring with the home missions committee of the respective district. (c) That where possible, to try to achieve a uniform compensation for home mission evangelists, in as far as local circumstances permit. GCY, 1924, pp. 61, 62.

1927 — Election of a new statistician for home missions

(Since Brother Bestvater is loaded with school work and other services) That Brother A. A. Schroeter be charged with the work (of statistician on home missions). GCY, 1927, p. 49.

1930 — Conference statistics

(By 1930 the nature of a report on home missions had radically changed. By this time the report was purely statistical and included information about the churches in the four districts of the Conference under the following headings: Districts — northern, central, western, southern. Summary information on: churches reporting, Conference membership, added by baptism, added by letter, loss through death, loss by letter, loss by excommunication, (present) membership, Sunday school classes, Sunday school pupils, choirs, singers, evangelization carried on, Bible conferences, number of elders, number of ministers, number of deacons, church property valuation.) (a) That the report be accepted, and Brother Schroeter be thanked (for his service), and be elected for another three years. (b) That the report (by the local churches) for the General (M.B.) Conference be prepared and sent in every three years (to the statistician) on the last New Year before the ensuing Conference. (c) That a simple (uniform) bookkeeping be introduced in order that the assembled information can be entered in a book and preserved for the Conference for the future. (d) That the expenses connected with this work and the necessary bookkeeping records be paid from the Publication treasury. GCY, 1930, pp. 54, 55.

1930

Note. By 1921 the Conference had created a
committee listed as “committee for evangelization” consisting of a main secretary elected by the Conference (who later became the statistician) and the secretaries of the various district conferences. This committee was to keep the Conference informed on what was being done in the local churches by way of evangelization. Its report was gradually made more inclusive and became the statistical report of the Conference prepared every triennium by the statistician. GCY, 1921, p. 76; 1924, p. 80; 1927, p. 72; 1930, p. 63 and 76.

1933

Note. Statistical report accepted. GCY, 1933, pp. 51-54.

1936

Note. Statistical report accepted. GCY, 1936, pp. 63, 71 and 73. The constitution adopted by the Conference in 1936 provided for a home missions committee consisting of a statistician elected by the Conference, and the secretaries of the committees on home missions of the various districts. Constitution, 1936, p. 30.

1939 — Manual of instruction

(The recommendations of the home missions committee were accepted). (a) That in regard to the instruction of our youth in the fundamentals of Holy Scriptures, and our distinctive position, . . . a manual be prepared in question and answer form. GCY, 1939, p. 39.

1939 — Uniformity in singing and use of hymnals

(The committee had been assigned the task of finding a way of achieving greater uniformity in general singing and the use of hymnals in Mennonite Brethren churches). (b) That this matter be further evaluated by the district conferences. GCY, 1939, p. 39.

1939 — Expense allowance

That $15 be allowed for expenses, and $25 for the labor (of the statistician, A. A. Schroeter), and that it be paid out of the Publication treasury. GCY, 1939, p. 39.

1943

Statistical report accepted. GCY, 1943, pp. 69-71, and 81.

1945 — Acceptance of recommendations by home missions committee

(By 1945 the scope of home missions and the assignment of the committee had become somewhat vague. But a desire was expressed on the Conference floor to strengthen home missions. The chairman of the Conference instructed the home missions committee, which included the secretaries of the home missions committees of the various districts, to meet and prepare some recommendations… The committee brought back the following recommendations, which were adopted by the Conference): (a) That we carry out the program of the constitution as provided for on page 30 (“That the committee consists of the statistician, elected by the Conference… for three years, and the secretaries of the committees for home missions of the district conferences… that the statistician serves as the executive secretary of the committee… that the committee collects information… regarding the conditions of the churches and the branches of work… that the statistician arranges the collected material and draws up a statistical report… that the committee is at the same time the connecting link in the
home mission work of the district conferences and offers opportunity to give and receive information on this branch of work, so that the home mission work can be done as uniformly as is possible.) (b) That the committee meet once a year to formulate plans to carry out the program. That the chairman and executive secretary determine time and place of meeting. That traveling expenses be financed by respective districts. (c) That the present district conference secretaries serve in the General Conference committee for a period of three years. (d) That a General Conference fund be created for the cause of aiding in establishing Sunday schools, mission stations, and smaller churches. GCY, 1945, pp. 27, 28, 68, 125.

1948 — Recommendations of home missions committee adopted

(a) Tenure of service. That the district conference home missions secretaries who are in office at the time of the General Conference serve throughout the three years of the Conference term in order to stabilize the committee. GCY, 1948, p. 41. (b) Exchange of evangelists between districts. That the committee keep a list of active evangelists who may be available for work in other districts. Only evangelists who enjoy the endorsement of their own district board… be placed on the General Conference list. District conference boards or individual churches may obtain the list of available evangelists on request, directing their request to the statistician of the General Conference. This being a new function of this committee… it is hoped to have the active support of the district conference boards (of home missions) in making this information available. (c) Salaries of evangelists and home mission workers. That this committee through the office of the statistician attempt to have up to date information regarding the salary schedule paid conference workers in their respective districts. That this information be compiled and relayed to the district boards at intervals, in order that all may have the necessary information to facilitate the establishment of a uniform schedule. (d) Support of ministers of underprivileged churches. That the district conference boards (of home missions) should attempt to cope with the problems of their own districts. If, however, the problem is beyond the ability of the district board, the case may be reported to the General Conference committee, which will direct an appeal to the churches of the other districts for assistance of that needy district. (e) Reports and charts. To thank the committee for its great effort in bringing these reports, and to make available these reports and charts to each pastor. GCY, 1948, pp. 41-45.

1951 — 1951 resolutions on home missions

(a) That the home missions board meet annually for the purposes as outlined in the constitution. (b) That to make this possible… the Conference establish a home mission treasury and transfer from the last Sunday’s home missions offering the amount necessary to secure the functions of the home mission board. (d) That the financial needs of the statistician be met from the approved $500 granted the home missions committee. GCY, 1951, p. 21.

1954 — Establishment of a committee on evangelism

(After the statistical report had been accepted with gratitude, the Conference adopted the following): (a) That the membership of an active evangelistic committee be composed by the appointment of one member by each participating district
or province through the respective home mission boards. That this evangelistic committee of the participating districts or provinces… not… replace, but… supplement the district efforts in evangelism. (b) That the officers of said evangelism committee be made up of chairman, secretary, and treasurer for the Conference interim. (c) That this committee… be responsible for the appointment of an evangelist or evangelists for the participating districts within the General (M.B.) Conference. (d) That this committee be charged with the setting up of an operating budget. GCY, 1954, pp. 128-133.

1957 — Report by committee of home missions accepted

That the report on home missions, and the statistical report be accepted, and that Brother A. A. Schroeter be again elected. GCY, 1957, pp. 44-48.

1960 — Report by committee of home missions accepted

That the report by the committee of home missions, and the statistical report be accepted, and that the secretary cast a unanimous ballot for Brother A. A. Schroeter (to continue as statistician of the Conference). GCY, 1960, pp. 100-106.

1963 — Report of statistician accepted

That the statistician’s report be accepted, and that Brother Vernon Wiebe be elected to serve as Conference statistician. GCY, 1963, pp. 50-56.

1963 — Provision of the new constitution

The 1963 M.B. Conference constitution provided a consultative committee on home missions “to consist of the statistician elected by the Conference at large for a term of three years and of the chairmen or secretaries of the U.S.A. district home missions boards and the chairmen or secretaries of the Canadian provincial home missions boards…. The duty of the committee shall be ‘to serve as consultative body and shall gather and make available statistical and other information on the progress of home missions and report to the Conference on data of general interest.”’ M.B - Conference constitution, pp. 37 and 68.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EVANGELICALS

1945 — N.A.E. affiliation

That the General (M.B.) Conference make application for association with the National Association of Evangelicals for the following reasons: (a) To support morally the stand against modernism. (b) To have in times of need an adequate representation for our foreign missions activities, in case our own institutions are unable to take care of this. (c) To remain in contact with evangelical efforts in the Sunday school work. GCY, 1945, p. 74.

1948 — N.A.E.

That our Conference continue its relationship with the NAE for the present on the basis of the General Conference decision of 1945, GCY, p. 74. GCY, 1948, p. 102.

1951 — Annual contribution to N.A.E.

That in view of the splendid services the National Association of Evangelicals is rendering to the cause of evangelical Christianity the world over, we contribute $350 annually to said association from our Conference treasury. GCY, 1951, p. 122.
1954 — N.A.E. debt liquidation

That since, due to various legitimate reasons, the NAE has incurred a sizeable debt and has appealed to the various conferences that all members or associate members rally to the need… the Conference contribute $200 for the aforesaid purpose. GCY, 1954, p. 20.

NAME OF THE CONFERENCE

1963 — Name change of Conference

That in the light of the study by the Board of Reference and Counsel (See study, GCY, 1963, pp. 43-45), the name of our brotherhood shall be “The General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches.” GCY, 1963, p. 45.

NATURALIZATION (CITIZENSHIP)

1921 — Securing citizenship papers

That the Conference suggest the contacting of the proper Senator in this behalf. GCY, 1921, p. 53.

NON-RESISTANCE

1902

Note. The 1902 Confession of Faith of the Conference cited “Non Resistance” as follows: “We also do not consider ourselves to have the right to wield the sword.” GCY, 1919, p. 502.

1919 — Non-resistance

(a) That the sentence in the 1902 Confession of Faith be deleted, and that the following paragraph be added: “For on the matter of war we believe and confess, that the way it is waged by the western powers, it is manifestly contrary to the principles of the kingdom of Christ, and therefore our members are forbidden to participate in it. We much more have to wage a spiritual warfare against the powers of darkness, that rule in the air. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places (Eph. 6: 12). And Jesus says: Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword (Mt. 26:52). “Know ye not what manner of spirit ye are of? For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them” (Lk. 9:55, 56). “My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence (Jn. 18:36). And the Apostle Paul says (2 Cor. 10:3-6), “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.” Therefore we take our stand with Peter and the other Apostles: We ought to obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29).

(b) That a (temporary) committee be appointed to present the following amendment to the churches for consideration: “We consider the children of our members, who have not yet been baptized, as belonging to our church household, as long as they have not on their own accord joined another church.” GCY, 1919, pp. 502, 503.
1919 — Committee on non-resistance created

That a committee on non-resistance be created to whom matters relating to non-resistance can be referred. (The following three brethren were appointed: H. W. Lohrenz, Gerhard Wiens, and John Berg). GCY, 1919, p. 504.

1921 — Report by temporary committee

(The committee appointed in 1919, to present the amendment [See above (b) GCY, 1919, p. 503] regarding children not yet baptized, reported that the amendment had passed by a vote of 63 to 12. Members of this committee were H. W. Lohrenz, John Berg, H. A. Neufeld). GCY, 1921, p. 52.

1921 — Statement to U.S. President

That the Conference send a writing of recognition and appreciation to President (Warren G.) Harding, in recognition of the President’s interest in the question of demobilization and abolition of war. GCY, 1921, p. 52.

1924 — Report raised to resolution

(That the report be adopted as follows): (a) That in regard to the purpose of the (two Mennonite peace conferences which had been attended by two members of the committee on non-resistance, and by two other brethren) conferences, as we understand it, namely, to create a non-war world, we believe, that the same cannot be attained until the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, Himself shall return. (b) Yet we believe, that, first, it is our duty to proclaim the message of peace through our walk, in the home, in the Sunday school, in the church, in our community (Is. 52:7). (c) Second, we consider it our duty to maintain the position to our Government, stated in Jer. 29:7, and in 1 Tim. 2:1. This includes that we endeavor to influence our government, especially the legislative body, to maintain peace and to abstain from war. (d) We believe that our greatest mission consists in proclaiming the Gospel of Salvation, which leads to the renewing of the inner man, for without regeneration no true and lasting peace, can be attained (Rom. 12:1, 2; 8:1,2,5,6; Gal. 5:6).

Our position is clearly stated in paragraph 67, Confession of Faith, (revised edition). Confession of Faith, 1958, pp. 42-44. (e) We do not believe that the (peace) conference was held in vain, even though we cannot wholly agree with the program that is to achieve the final (warless world) end. Such conferences are useful for stimulation and preparation, in that they contribute the following:
1. They stimulate us and our youth to a Christian walk, through which the divine light can shine. 2. They lead to a united front in our position, in case war breaks out again, as to the position we are to take in regard to the military draft, the wearing of the military uniform, and what type of service our young men may accept. 3. They offer an opportunity to unite our efforts in the alleviation of physical distress, when great devastations result from war, pestilence or accidents.

1924 — Committee on non-resistance to continue

(a) That the committee on non-resistance continue. (b) That the committee remain alert and continue to work, in order to give direction in case of emergency. GCY, 1924, pp. 62-65.

1927 — New committee on non-resistance

(Brother Gerhard Wiens, member of the committee on non-resistance up to 1927,
reported that since times had been tranquil during the past three years, little had been done by the committee, and recommended that the Conference adopt the Southern District committee on non-resistance to serve as committee of the General Conference). That the committee of the Southern District composed of the brethren P. C. Hiebert, P. S. Goertz, and P. R. Lange, be requested to serve (as committee on non-resistance of) the General (M.B.) Conference. GCY, 1927, pp. 66.

1930 — Re-election of committee on non-resistance

That the Conference thank the committee (Hiebert, Goertz, Lange, for their service during the past three years) and request them to continue to serve until the next Conference. GCY, 1930, p. 59.

1933 — Committee on non-resistance presented its report under the name of committee on public relations

Note. The committee gave a report and some recommendations, but there is no record that these were adopted by the Conference. GCY, 1933, pp. 60, 61.

1936

Note. The committee on non-resistance (Hiebert, Goertz, Lange) presented its report and some recommendations, but there is no record that the latter were adopted. GCY, 1936, pp. 60-63.

1936 — Merger of committee on non-resistance with committee on relief

(Note: the 1936 constitution of the Conference reduced the boards and committees to a membership of five). That in the committee on relief and non-resistance, the following brethren serve: P. C. Hiebert, J. W. Warkentin, D. C. Eitzen, A. E. Janzen, and M. A. Kroeker. GCY, 1936, pp. 60-63.

1939 — Peace, non-resistance, instruction to youth

(a) That the committee on non-resistance prepare a written document clarifying our position, and to enable us to present something specific if asked. (b) That we as Conference approve the organization of the Mennonite Central Peace Committee and our participation in it. (c) That the proposed plan in the interests of the drafted youth, be approved. (d) That the entire matter be worked out with the head of the nation, and be submitted for adoption as soon as practically possible. (e) That we put forth further efforts to teach the members of our churches the way of peace, (1) Through sermon and instruction in the home and in all worship services; (2) Through the distribution of appropriate literature; (3) Through the preparation of reports and addresses that elucidate this endeavor. (f) That by way of instruction and intercession we continue to observe the Sunday before “Armistice Day” as peace Sunday, and in that connection gather an offering for the promotion of the peace movement. (g) That we counsel our youth that is subject to draft, to accept service which helps to preserve life and rehabilitate property, if such service can be rendered under civilian administration, namely, outside of the military organization. (h) That we counsel our members to remain humble but firm in their position of faith, even at the cost of suffering and persecution. To suffer for the faith is no disgrace, and promises reward for time and eternity. GCY, 1939, pp. 50, 51.
1939 — Written document of loyalty under non-resistance

That the delegates of the Mennonite Brethren churches of North America, assembled from Canada and the United States, wish to go on record, (a) As those who love their countries, the United States and Canada, and as those who seek the highest welfare of these lands, and who through loyalty and law obedience as well as cooperation with the respective governments try to express such loyalty through the carrying on of a constructive program of charitable relief, of peace and goodwill toward all men. (b) The delegates further wish to go on record as having no sympathy or connection with organizations of foreign origin who are carrying on propaganda in these countries. (c) The delegates further desire to express their gratitude to the governments of our cherished lands for pursuing a program of liberty and justice toward all men. (Note: The Conference increased the membership by re-establishing two committees: Relief—P. C. Hiebert, D. C. Eitzen, M. A. Kroeker, H. E. Dahl, A. E. Janzen, J. P. Wiebe, C. F. Klassen. Non-resistance—P. C. Hiebert, D. C. Eitzen, M. A. Kroeker, H. E. Dahl, A. E. Janzen.) GCY, 1939, pp. 48-51.

1943

Note. By 1943 this work of the committee on non-resistance and relief was again merged. The positive side of non-resistance found its expression in substitute service under the direction of the committee on General Welfare and Public Relations (through MCC), during the time of the Second World War. GCY, 1943, pp. 59-69.

1943 — Committee asked to continue


1945

Note. In 1945 the matter of non-resistance as such did not receive special attention at the Conference. GCY, 1945, pp. 31-41.

1948 — Statement of Position on Non-Resistance

(a) That we humble ourselves deeply before the Lord and Master who has purchased us with His own life’s blood, because we have not yet learned, in spite of all the grace bestowed upon us, to serve Him more faithfully, in word and deed. (b) That we confess that we, as a Conference, have in the past come far short of the ethical requirements and demands of the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles. We have often participated in activities and had our interests in movements that did not contribute to the preservation of human life: on the contrary, they often contributed to the destruction of life. (c) That we recommend to the Conference and to the churches to pray sincerely for a spiritual revival in our denominations: quarrels, mistrust, deception, etc., must be banned from our midst. (d) That every church assume the obligation to instruct her young people in this fundamental principle of our faith — non-resistance. May we emphasize, though, that non-resistance does not only concern itself with the bearing of arms but also with the life in the home, in the church, and in the neighborhood. It is also possible to destroy life with our tongue. (e) That the Conference expects that our men eligible for service, whenever called upon, will render valuable service for our people and country in two channels according to their conscientious convictions: (1) In agriculture and forestry.
projects, mental hospitals, and other institutions of civilian character, and in the field of rehabilitation and relief. (2) As non-combatants in the medical corps, not bearing arms nor participating in the training with weapons, rendering services to the sick and wounded soldiers, to nursing and the saving of lives, but not participating in any service that would tend toward the destruction of human life, and no service in defense plants. Arrangements should be made with the government at this time in order that such a way for service in the medical corps may be found. Under no circumstances can our brethren take the military oath. Their sincere affirmation will be sufficient. (f) That our brethren who have so faithfully lived their convictions during the last war and stood so soundly upon our principles of peace hereby receive the heartfelt appreciation and sincere thanks of the Conference, and we pray that they may continue humbly in the service of their Lord and Master. (g) That the above principles point out the direction for the future but do not react to the recent past where we have so seriously neglected to definitely point out the way by word and example. Humbly we bow ourselves under the word of 1 John 1:9, “But if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Another word of God says, “Go and sin no more, God help us — we can do nothing else. GCY, 1948, pp. 103, 104.

1951 — Modification of statement of 1948

(a) That, forasmuch as the statement on non-resistance submitted by the Committee of Reference and Counsel to the General Conference of the M.B. Church, in August 1948, in Mountain Lake, Minnesota, was slightly changed by the Conference before its adoption, and some parts deleted (and since)... the statement in its final form closes with a sentence which is contradictory in its relationship to the purpose of the preceding sentence... that the sentence “Their sincere affirmation will be sufficient” be deleted. GCY, 1951, p. 123.

1951 — Additional paragraph added to the 1948 statement on non-resistance

(b) That such as enter military service to participate in the work that destroys human life, should be considered as disobeying principles of Scripture and our confession of faith and in consequence can no longer be considered as members in good standing. It shall be our duty to continue to love them and make them objects of our intercessory prayers as erring brethren who must be sought in an effort to bring them back into the obedience of the Word of God. Such as refuse to obey the due admonition shall be further dealt with according to the Scriptures and their membership in the church discontinued. GCY, 1951, p. 124.

1954 — The 1948 statement on non-combatants rescinded

That because the findings of the investigation (made in Washington, Department of War, October 13, 1954) clearly establish that there exists no avenue for a restricted non-combatant service as proposed by the Mennonite Brethren Conference in its resolution (of 1948, resolution No.5, (b), page 104, GCY), the Conference rescinds the afore-mentioned resolution (of 1948 on non-combatants). GCY, 1954, pp. 114-121.

1957 — Non-resistance defined

That the following augmented statement be referred to the various districts for study and adoption. GCY, 1957, p. 111.
Statement of Biblical non-resistance

(a) The church of Jesus Christ is a fellowship of redeemed individuals. The members of the church are a separated people... called out of darkness into the marvelous light of the children of God. As such we as Mennonite Brethren accept and acknowledge Christ as our Head and the Scriptures as our supreme authority for faith and practice (2 Tim. 3:14-17). This relationship to Christ and this acceptance of authority therefore determines our position toward the question of participation in war.

(b) Non-resistance is a Biblical principle evinced from the very tenor of the New Testament teachings regarding the practical Christian life and is, of course, clearly exemplified by Jesus Christ. To “those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil,” (Heb. 5:14) the doctrine of non-resistance is almost self evident. But Biblical non-resistance is not pacifism; it arises from an entirely different motive, and the two are propagated by two entirely different groups of people. Scripturally speaking, it arises from the fact of the believer’s:

(1) New nature, miraculously imparted when he was born again (Eph. 4:22-24, 31-32; Col. 3:8-10).

(2) New relationship to Jesus Christ, which in turn affects his total relationship to God, to man, and to the world through the acceptance of Christ as Savior and Lord (Rom. 6:4; 1 Cor. 12:13; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 5:1).

(3) New walk prescribed in Scripture, which leaves no room for activities and attitudes naturally expected of soldiers (Rom. 8:1, 4; Eph. 4:1; 5:10, 15; Col. 2:6).

(4) New citizenship and loyalty (Eph. 2:19; Phil. 3:20, R.V.); there is no New Testament call upon the Christian to fight “a defensive war,” or “war to end war,” or “to save the world for democracy,” or even to establish a state of righteousness. This leads us to the next logical assertion, i.e., that the doctrine of non-resistance arises from the fact of the believer’s

(5) New warfare (John 18:36; 2 Cor. 10:3-6). The spiritual warfare as described in these references is in essence diametrically opposed to the methods, instruments and objectives of physical warfare.

(6) New mission. The Christian’s first and foremost duty is to serve and glorify God. This duty is not partial, optional, or secondary. The promotion of the work of Christ is every Christian’s primary mission. The nature of this mission is such that active participation in war, the bearing of arms for the destruction of human life, by a born-again believer constitutes a serious violation of the fixed principle laid down by Christ and Paul as expressed in Luke 9:62 and in 2 Tim. 2:4 respectively. A Christian is not at liberty to take leave from this commission that for a season “he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.”

(7) New life principle — love. According to Christ, love is the chief mark of discipleship as well as the chief New Testament commandment (John 13:34-35, 15:10, 12, 17-19). Can a man destroy a fellowman while he loves him? The Apostle John holds that he who “shutteth up his bowels of compassion from his brother,” he asks, “how dwelleth the love of God in him?” (1 John 3:17). We do not, even as the State does not, believe in “mercy killing,” much less do we believe it possible to kill while we love. Therefore, our path is clear; we dare not be motivated or determined in our actions and relationships by anything but love “shed abroad into our hearts” (Rom. 5:5), and “faith that worketh by love” (Gal. 5:6). Hence, we cannot take human life even in self-defense.

(c) Practically speaking, the living out of the principle of Biblical non-resistance is but
daring to apply to our daily activities and relationships what Jesus Christ, the Captain of our salvation, has taught and exemplified and is but one phase of virile discipleship. The principle of non-resistance, therefore, is not limited to war. We believe and teach that it applies to every phase of our life, to all relationships, personal, social, economic, political, national and international. The whole of the Christian personality must be integrated around the Person of Jesus Christ as He has revealed Himself in redemptive love according to the Scripture (Luke 6:29-37; Rom. 12:1, 2; 1 Thess. 5:23).

(d) War is evil, brutal, and inhuman. The fact that Jesus said “there shall be wars and rumors of wars” cannot justly be construed to be His stamp of approval upon war. As one militarist has said, “War is the sink of all evil.” It glorifies might, greed, lust, and selfishness. The nature of war has ever been, is now, and will remain to be incompatible with the new nature, relationship, walk, citizenship, loyalty, warfare, mission and principle of life of the regenerated Christian (James 4:1-5). Paul admonishes the Ephesians to “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph. 5:11). Though the context does not here directly deal with the activities and consequences of war, what words could better describe them?

(e) Every person is an eternal soul. The New Testament allows the Christian only one view of man; we look upon every person as a soul for whom Christ died” (1 Cor. 8:11), needing to be, and potentially capable of being saved. How dare we cut short his days and thereby his chances to accept the grace of God?

(f) Our loyalty is to our Government. We declare our unequivocal loyalty to our government and gladly owe our duty to respect, obey, pray for and be subject to the powers that be.” Our services and properties are at the disposal of our government for the alleviation of need and the saving of lives. We are willing to sacrifice for our country and the welfare of others. In case of a conflict between the demands of the State and the laws of God, however, the Christian ought to obey God rather than man” (Acts 5:29).

(g) Exhortation to our young men. We, therefore, exhort our Christian young men to live consistent with the Scriptural teaching and historic testimony of our Brotherhood and challenge them to accept the provision of civilian service which our government has made, realizing that this provision offers an acceptable expression of our Scriptural objection to war (1 Cor. 15:58) but under no circumstances to accept responsibilities that demand the destruction of human life. These things we believe and teach: These are our convictions: In the words of the great Martin Luther: “Here we stand; we can do none other, so help us God.”

In the meantime we are eagerly looking for and hastening unto the day of our Lord’s return when Christ, the Captain of our Salvation, will rapture the Church, and then together with His saints come back to earth as the Prince of Peace to establish His kingdom of righteousness and men shall learn war no more. ‘And they shall not hurt nor destroy… for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” (Is. 11:9). GCY, 1957, pp. 111, 112, 113.

1960

Note. The matter of non-resistance had again become a part of the larger sphere of general welfare and public relations and was not specifically alluded to in the 1960 report by the Board of General Welfare and Public Relations. This Board by this time had also merged with the members of general welfare of the K.M.B. Conference. GCY, 1960, pp. 115433.
1963 — Booklet on The Mennonite Brethren Church Statement on Non-Resistance presented to the Conference by the Board of General Welfare and Public Relations

Note. The contents of this booklet are based on the statement submitted to the Conference in GCY, 1954, pp. 121, 122, and augmented by the statement of the Board of Reference and Counsel as presented to the Conference in GCY, 1957, pp. 111-113.

(That) The Church speaks on non-resistance:
In stating our convictions we establish no new doctrine, but merely restate the historic faith which our forefathers confirmed on several occasions. Our youth faces the issue of participation in war, which obligates us to a clear restatement of our position, thereby reaffirming and strengthening our belief in non-resistance.
Non-resistance is a Biblical principle clearly exemplified by Jesus Christ. The church as the body of Christ is a fellowship of the redeemed. Therefore the members are a separated people (John 17:16). They accept Christ as their pattern (1 John 2:6). Their lives are controlled by redemptive love (Romans 5:5).
Since the responsibility of the church is to represent Christ, its Head, and to evangelize the world, participation in any form of war is impossible for its members.
The practice of the redeemed in Christ demands that every phase of their lives in all relationships, such as personal, social, national, and international, be governed by the supreme law of love, and is not limited to abstinence from military service. It is a general attitude of the Christian as he seeks the redemption of his fellow men.
Human life is sacred unto God, and a Christian has no right to destroy life. War is evil, brutal, and inhuman. It glorifies might, greed, and selfishness. The nature of war remains incompatible with the new nature of a regenerated Christian.
We declare our sincere loyalty to our government and believe it our duty to respect, obey, and pray for our rulers. We would be “subject to the powers that be.” In case of a conflict between the demands of the state and the laws of God, the Christian ‘ought to obey God rather than man” (Acts 5:29).
We exhort our Christian young men to live consistent with the Scriptural and historic testimony of our brotherhood on peace and challenge them to accept the provision of civilian service which our government has made, realizing that this service offers a fuller expression of our Scriptural objection to war. GCY, 1963, pp. 112, 113.

OFFICE BUILDING (CONFERENCE)

1945 — Conference office building

(a) That the Conference provide an office building for Conference activities and for the fireproof storing of valuable Conference documents and literature at an estimated cost of $15,000 to $20,000, to be located at Hillsboro, Kansas. (b) That in view of the pressing need to provide living quarters for missionaries on furlough or retired and for missionary children while attending school, the Board of Missions recommends to the Conference the erection of a suitable building or buildings. (c) That the Conference go on record to encourage our brethren and sisters who in gratitude to the Lord feel led to do so, to leave gifts, legacies, and memorials for this purpose. GCY, 1945, p. 25, and p. 47, paragraph 3.

ORDINATION, RULES CONCERNING

1896 — Publishing of names

That the Conference publish the names of all
ordained brethren in the Conference reports. GCY, 1896, p. 192.

1904 -- Ordination of ministers and deacons

That the Conference continues to endorse the former procedure of our churches that only elders officiate at ordinations of ministers and deacons. GCY, 1904, p. 319.

1907 -- Ordination of evangelists and other workers

That brethren such as evangelists and other conference workers that may be called upon in their visiting of other churches to serve at the Lord's table, perform or officiate at baptisms or marriages, should be ordained by their respective congregations. GCY, 1907, p. 379.

1919 -- Ordination of missionaries

That the Conference recommends that the home churches do the ordaining as well as outfitting of missionaries who have been accepted by the M.B. Conference and are to go out for service. GCY, 1919, p. 482.

1921 -- Officiating at ordinations

That the Conference deems it advisable that only elders officiate at the ordination of ministers. GCY, 1921, p. 53.

1933 -- Importance of ordination and uniformity of procedure

(a) Importance. That in view of the great importance of public recognition that the laying on of hands carries with it for a worker (minister, deacon) in the churches, and in view of the fact that an ordained brother is also given recognition in the other churches of the Conference, the Conference finds itself compelled to proceed uniformly in the performance of the act of ordination in the churches. (b) Procedure. That when a local church desires to ordain a brother, it makes this desire known to representatives of the neighboring M.B. churches for consideration. If the neighboring churches recommend the ordination, the respective local church then requests an elder, experienced (minister) brother who enjoys the general confidence in the constituency, to perform the act of ordination. GCY, 1933, p. 65.

1943 -- Ordination by other denominations

That it has been the practice of our church (M.B. Conference) to abide by the principle that we do not recognize ordinations of other denominations with the exception of those of the K.M.B. church. GCY, 1943, p. 76.

1957 -- I. Ordination, commissioning, licensing

Note. This question had been raised in 1954 -- GCY, 1954, pp. 6, 7, 22. (a) Ordination. That ordination to the Gospel ministry, at home or abroad, under the sponsorship or auspices of the Mennonite Brethren Church ... be extended exclusively to Christian workers who are acceptable for the ministry of the Word within the framework of the M.B. Church and such who are definitely and honestly desirous to labor within said framework. GCY, 1957, p. 106. (b) License. That licensing distinguishes itself from ordination in that (1) It is only for a specific Christian work project and for a specified period of time. (2) It may be renewed or terminated at the discretion of the licensing body. (3) It authorizes a given person to preach the Gospel, baptize believers, admit members, administer the Lord's Supper and feet washing, marry
couples and officiate at funerals but only within the confines of said Christian work project. (4) For the exercise of the above enumerated ministries elsewhere, the licensee must have an invitation and secure the permission of the committee to whom he is directly responsible. (5) The initiation for the licensing of, [1] A church worker must come from the supervising committee and be channeled to the home church through the church council. [2] In case the licensed worker is to serve in a district conference mission project, the initiative is to be taken by the home mission board of the respective district. [3] If... the licensee is to serve in a General Conference mission project, the initiative is to be taken by the respective General Conference committee, and in all cases, channeled to the home church through the church council. GCY, 1957, p. 106.

(c) Commission. (Commissioning of sisters). That in view of the fact that we as an M.B. Church, on the basis of clearly conceived Scriptural convictions, do not admit sisters to the public Gospel preaching ministry on par with brethren, we as Conference designate the fact of setting aside sisters to missionary work a "commissioning" rather than "an ordination." GCY, 1957, p. 106.

1957 -- II. General policies governing the selection and Licensing of ministers

(a) Selection of a worker. The selection of a worker for an extension project...in two ways: (1) Inception of an extension project by the individual or by a couple. That the inception of an extension project is usually the result of the vision or burden of an individual brother or a couple. Generally it starts with a Bible class or a Sunday school class for unchurched children in some home. As the Lord blesses... it grows and in time adults (parents) are attracted. Soon the desire is expressed by them for other Gospel services. Thus it may slowly develop into a regular and established work which in some cases has the potential of a future church. The mother church hears about it. The worker gives a report. The church is impressed and wishes the worker God's blessing. Thus the work and the worker receive church sanction. The church may even offer to adopt the project, assume the responsibility for its spiritual welfare, and thus it becomes a church-sponsored mission project. Thereupon the church either creates an extension committee or charges a standing committee to supervise the work. By this action the extension worker also is approved to continue in the direction of the work. Henceforth he is responsible to the church through the above-named committee. Indirectly, the selection of a lay minister has taken place. (2) Inception by a church. That the church as a body may become burdened for the lost in the community. A committee is elected to find ways and means of starting a Sunday school and of establishing a preaching center. A place is found and a worker or workers are selected. Among these there may be one who shows definite leadership ability, has appropriate gifts and gains the confidence of the mother church. For practical reasons the church may in time consider to license him. GCY, 1957, p. 107.

(b) Licensing of ministers new. That the licensing of ministers is a new phenomenon in our Mennonite Brethren circles. The need for it and practice of it has arisen directly out of a new movement in our churches known as extension work. The procedure and meaning of licensing a worker has been amply covered in another place of this report. Licensing may be performed upon a brother who is showing sufficient ability, leadership and interest to gain the confidence of the church that he will direct the work in a given extension project in harmony with Mennonite Brethren principles and
doctrines, though he may not have the qualifications prerequisite to ordination. GCY, 1957, p. 107.

ORGANIZATION OF A CHURCH

1889 — Requirements for the organization of a church

That when a group of believers numbering not less than 50 members is willing and able to support an elder, such group may organize as a church. GCY, 1889, p. 91.

1927 — Organization procedure of a new church

That we abide by the procedure followed in former years. (Namely), If a group of believers resides at a place where there is no church and they feel the need of organization, they may contact a well organized church in the vicinity, or the home missions committee of that district. Only members of good standing may be accepted by letter. If a letter is not available, the matter should be carefully weighed by responsible brethren. The confession of faith and the constitution of the M .B. Conference should be presented to and adopted by the newly organizing church. After due organization, the home missions board recommends the acceptance of such congregation for Conference membership. GCY, 1927, p. 68.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, CONFERENCE

1963 — Organizational structure of M.B. Conference

That the incoming Board of Reference and Counsel make a thorough study of the organizational structure of the General (M.B.) Conference with respect to its world-wide implications. GCY, 1963, pp. 41, 42.

OUTSIDE INTERESTS

1907 — Collecting of money by outside interests

That the Conference urges the churches not to permit outside collectors to have privileges to the extent that our own Conference interests suffer thereby. GCY, 1907, p. 379.

1912 — Collectors for outside interests in our circles

That concerning collectors for outside interests it was decided that such persons be referred to the foreign missions committee of our Conference, which after examining the purpose of the collectors, may at its discretion issue a recommendation to the churches that are to be visited. GCY, 1912, p. 446.

1948 — Caution and direction to churches

That (M.B.) churches exercise extreme care in this matter, and anyone representing interests outside of our Conference projects wishing to collect funds in our Conference should first have the approval of the Committee of Reference and Counsel. Any church which is approached by such collectors should refer their names to the chairman or secretary of the Committee of Reference and Counsel and await the recommendation of the committee before permitting the person or persons in question to gather funds. GCY, 1948, p. 101.
PATRIOTISM

1943 — Loyalty to our country

That we confirm our undivided loyalty to our country and to our government, which has graciously provided ways and means affording our young men a chance to serve their country without being compelled to become a part of the military power, which would be contrary to our confession of faith and their consciences. GCY, 1943, p. 67.

PEACE, ON

1939 — On peace

(a) That we make further attempts to teach the members of our churches the way of peace . . . (b) That we continue to consider the last Sunday before Armistice Day” as peace day, through instruction and intercession, and in that connection gather an offering to help promote the peace movement. (See also nonresistance, general welfare and public relations.) GCY, 1939, p. 51.

1943 — Pence Sunday

That we continue to observe Sunday before national Armistice Day as special Peace Sunday. GCY, 1943, p. 69.

1945 — Peace Sunday

That we continue to observe the Sunday before national Armistice Day (November 11) as special Peace Sunday. GCY, 1945, p. 41.

1954 — Witness for peace

That in loyalty to Christ and love to fellowmen (we) present a strong uncompromising witness for peace by a clear personal testimony, by liberal giving and, if need be, by joyful sacrifice of property, position, conveniences, and suffering for our faith and to continue the Conference established custom of using the Sunday nearest to Armistice Day as peace Sunday. GCY, 1954, p. 114.

1957 — Collaboration with MCC on peace

That we work together with MCC in representation of our Christian principles before government with questions pertaining to peace position. GCY, 1957, p. 101.

1960 — Peace Sunday

That the Conference continue the established custom of observing the Sunday nearest to Veterans’ Day, November 11, as Peace Sunday. GCY, 1960, p. 131.

1963 — Witness through MCC peace section.


PENSION, FOREIGN MISSIONS

1927 — Pension support fund

(a) That the committee on (foreign) missions work out a plan according to which a fund may be created (for the support of retiring missionaries) and present it at the next Conference. (b) Amended: That the plan be sent to the churches (for consideration) and if accepted, authorize the mission (board) directors to begin with the collection (of same). GCY, 1927, pp. 31, 32.
1936 — Provisional pension provision

(a) That missionaries entitled to pension be paid $500 per family a year with the provision that they, as much as possible, do deputation work in the churches in the interests of foreign missions... (b) That the Conference nominate a committee of three brethren, who together with the committee on missions, prepare a plan and implement it, as to the manner in which funds for such pension may be accumulated. (c) That in order that the mission treasury not run short of funds, every church annually gather an offering during the next three years for this purpose. GCY, 1936, pp. 33.

1939 — Pension source created

(a) That in every month one Sunday school offering be taken for pension. (b) And if possible, that each respective offering amount to 5 cents per Sunday school member. (c) That if there be brethren or sisters or friends of missions, who wish to contribute voluntary gifts for a pension fund, that (the opportunity for) this remain free and open. GCY, 1939, p. 11.

1943 — Pensions approved

That the following appropriations be approved: Brother N. N. Hiebert, $500; Sister F. J. Wiens, $500; Sister J. S. Dick, $400; Sister B. F. Wiens, $200. GCY, 1943, p. 30.

1951 — Pension offering modification

That churches which are not using the 5 cents per month per Sunday school pupil, nor have made some other provision by means of which to gather the pension money (for foreign missions) that they cover their participation by one offering for this purpose once a year. GCY, 1951, pp. 56, 57.

1960 — Social Security and pension regulations

(a) Equalization of benefits. That in order to equalize the financial benefits of Social Security and Old Age Pension now available at a small cost in USA and at no cost to the Canadian missionaries... the Social Security tax be paid for the missionaries by the foreign missions treasury out of the pension account. Missionaries who have not entered the Social Security program shall receive only the difference in payment between the amount to which they would have been entitled if they had entered and the maximum figure approved by the Board of Foreign Missions. (b) Sinking fund. That in order to prepare the treasury to meet future demands upon it for old age or pension payments, that a sinking fund be created into which an amount equal to 2 percent or more of the missionaries’ salaries be deposited every year to safeguard the treasury’s ability in the future to pay the difference between the government or other pension allowance to missionaries and the maximum figure approved for each missionary by the Board of Foreign Missions. (c) Eligibility. That a missionary becomes eligible for pension from the foreign missions treasury after 20 years of service and upon reaching the age of 65. If the 20 years of service is completed before reaching the age of 65, the pension allowance does not become payable until 65. (d) Termination of services. That termination of service in M.B. Foreign Missions also releases the treasury from the obligation of any further Social Security tax payments made for the respective missionary, as well as from any further pension obligations. (e) Special cases. That experiences that result in fatalities which require the missionary’s withdrawal from service and which are not covered by the above principles or by provisions in the
M.B. Conference constitution shall be considered on the merit of the particular case. GCY, 1960, p. 80.

**PENSION, CITY MISSIONS**

**1945 --- Pension provision**

That when the time comes that Brother and Sister (A. A.) Smith retire from all active service, the Conference provide for an adequate pension for them. GCY, 1945, p. 42.

**1957 --- Pension for A. A. Smiths**

That the Conference instruct the Board of Trustees to provide for the pension of $60 per month for Brother A. A. Smith who formerly received this pension from the Board of City Missions, which has been dissolved. (Minneapolis City Mission having been turned over to the Central District Conference). GCY, 1947, p. 114.

**POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT**

**1888 --- Delegation to political conventions**

That in regard to being delegate to national political conventions, it is strongly advised that, while we desire to have a good government, members should be careful so as not to defile their conscience. However, the Conference does not want to form a definite resolution in this matter. GCY, 1888, p. 70.

**1890 --- Political involvement**

That members of the church refrain from participation and involvement in the contentions of political parties, but are permitted to vote quietly at elections, and may also vote for prohibition.” GCY, 1890, p.107.

**1893 --- Holding public (political) office**

That our brethren shall not hold the offices of justice of the peace or constable. A member may be a “notary public.” GCY, 1893, p. 156.

**PROGRAMS OF THE CONFERENCE**

**1948 --- Reports and recommendations to be given in printed form**

(a) That in view of the fact that our conference program is constantly growing and that the Conference must either extend its time or seek a way to conserve time in order not to do injustice to the last section of the Conference program, be it resolved that all major reports and recommendations be prepared in printed form, and a copy be sent to each pastor in advance to enable the delegation of each church to study the reports and recommendations for a more intelligent approach and quicker action at the Conference sessions. GCY, 1948, p. 109.

(b) That in view of the fact that often motions are not too clearly defined nor too well heard from the floor and therefore indefiniteness and even misunderstanding is being created, be it resolved that the General Conference resolutions committee serving during the Conference sessions, seek to crystallize into a resolution the main thoughts expressed on the floor and write out the motions and present them to the Conference in both languages before they are voted on. GCY, 1948, p. 109.

**1951 --- Implementation of resolutions**

That the Conference go on record to urge the Conference leadership to implement more fully resolution one and two of the 44th General Conference (GCY, 1948, p. 109,

PROPERTY, DIVISION OF

1881 — Division of property at marriage

That in the division of property in the event of a second marriage, the man should also conscientiously make such division with due respect to the ones involved. GCY, 1881, p. 12.

1887 — Division of property before remarriage

That in case of remarriage, all property arrangements be adjusted beforehand, with good conscience, also observing the laws of the land. GCY, 1887, p. 56.

1902 — Disposition of vacated church property

That where churches are vacated because members have moved away and the property is sold, the proceeds should flow into the foreign missions treasury, unless the members of that particular church find it advisable to use the money for the purpose of erecting other church buildings. GCY, 1902, p. 269.

1945 — Property of the Southern District

That the General Conference turn back the property (church building at Johnstown, Colorado) now in the name of the General Conference, but belonging to the Southern District Conference, as soon as the Southern District Conference is incorporated and requests this change. GCY, 1945, p. 71.

PUBLICATION

1880 — Publication

(a) That regarding releases to periodicals, the Conference desires that important events be released (for publication), including the publication of the yearly reports of the churches, but that such releases be submitted to recognized brethren for approval. GCY, 1880, p. 8.

1883 — Publication of Conference resolutions


1884 — Publication committee created

(a) That the brethren Abr. Schellenberg, Dietrich Claassen, and J. F. Harms constitute a (publication) committee. (b) That they look after the publication of a written history of the brotherhood and publication of conference reports, reports on visits and news of our fields (of endeavor), and (c) That information for this purpose be addressed to Abraham Schellenberg, Alta., P.O. Harvey County, Kansas. GCY, 1884, pp. 25, 26.

1884

Note. During 1884 there originated within the publication committee the concept and the implementation of publishing an M.B. periodical and to name it Zionsbote. Rev. J. F. Harms was chosen editor. During 1884, 1885, 1886, the Zionsbote appeared quarterly with some irregularity, in 1887 an attempt was made to issue it monthly. GCY, 1884, p. 25; 1885, p. 35; Hist. M.B.C., Harms, p. 264.
1885 — Zionsbote approved by Conference

(a) That the publication committee elected last year again serve and be charged to publish the Zionsbote as well as the Conference resolutions (Conf. reports). (b) That from each church a correspondent send in short reports (to the Zionsbote). GCY, 1885, pp. 35, 36.

1886 — Frequency and price of “Zionsbote”

That every church leader inquire of his church and community as to how many copies of the Zionsbote are desired, if the subscription be raised to $1.50 per year and appear weekly, and report this to the editor (J. F. Harms) by December 1 (1886). GCY, 1886, p. 44.

1887 — First salary to editor of Zionsbote

(a) That brother (J. F.) Harms, editor, be allowed $50 (from the $73.95 in the publication treasury) for his service for this year (1887), and that at the next Conference his salary be set in line with the condition of the treasury. (b) To continue with the (monthly) publication as in this year, but it is wished that the Zionsbote carry more articles by the brethren. GCY, 1887, pp. 53, 54.

1888 — Zionsbote to appear weekly beginning with January 1, 1889

(a) That $25 be allowed Brother Harms for his labor with the Zionsbote for this year (1888). (b) That after new year (1889) the Zionsbote be issued weekly in the present format, and at the same price (50 cents per year). (c) That every brother subscribe for the Zionsbote and that in addition a liberal offering be gathered (in each church) which is to flow into the publication treasury. GCY, 1888, pp. 68, 69.

1888

Note. A wish was expressed by the delegation that the Zionsbote also feature news from our foreign missions, and correspondence regarding events within and beyond the church constituency. GCY, 1888, p. 69.

1889 — Zionsbote size doubled

That the Zionsbote be doubled in size, and that the subscription price be raised to 75 cents, and that whoever has a heart for the cause, contribute a dollar (per year). GCY, 1889, p. 88.

1890 — Editor’s salary paid from Conference treasury

(a) That the Zionsbote again be published at the subscription price of 75 cents per year, but that quite a few (be urged) rather pay one dollar. (b) To allow Brother J. F. Harms $50 from the conference treasury. GCY, 1890, p. 104.

1891 — Zionsbote

(a) That the members (Schellenberg, Harms, Peter Wall) of the (publication) committee remain the same. (b) That $25 be appropriated for Brother J. F. Harms from the Conference treasury. GCY, 1891, pp. 121, 122.

1892 — Zionsbote

(a) That the… subscription for the Zionsbote be raised to $1.00, and that whoever is able, pay $1.25. (b) That $50 be appropriated from the Conference treasury
for Brother J. F. Harms’ editorial services. GCY, 1892, p. 141.

1893 — Zionsbote financial situation improves

(Editor J. F. Harms reported that during the last year the Zionsbote had fared better financially). (a) That $50 from the Conference treasury be allowed the editor, Brother J. F. Harms, for his services. (b) That Brother Harms be asked to serve again the coming year for which he expressed his willingness. GCY, 1893, p. 155.

1894 — Zionsbote

(Again the Zionsbote is paying for itself). (a) That Editor J. F. Harms be allowed $50 from the publication treasury for his editorial services, for which he thanked (the Conference), and (b) He declared his willingness to continue to serve. (c) The Conference requested that a monthly “additional insert” appear with the Zionsbote. GCY, 1894, p. 166.

1895 — Zionsbote

That the Zionsbote with the additional insert continue. GCY, 1895, p. 176.

1896 — Zionsbote

(a) That the Zionsbote with the additional insert continue. (b) That Brother Harms continue to edit it. (c) That the Conference express its appreciation to Brother J. F. Harms. GCY, 1886, p. 190.

1897 — Zionsbote

(a) That the Zionsbote continue in its present form. (b) That the brethren (of the churches) be encouraged to send in more reports. (c) That the “Zionsbote” be more generally subscribed to, and paid for. GCY, 1897, p. 197.

1898 — Zionsbote aided by Missions committee

(a) That the Zionsbote continue. (b) That at the end of the year the missions committee take into consideration the financial record, and regulate the work accordingly. GCY, 1898, p. 208.

1899 — Zionsbote

(a) That the Zionsbote continue. (b) That Brother J. F. Harms continue in the work. GCY, 1899, p. 216.

1900 — Publication scope enlarged

Note. Brother P. F. Duerksen reported by letter that under the Lord’s blessings the editing of Sunday school lessons had proved a success during the past year, and that if the Conference would assume this endeavor, it would serve to encourage him. The chairman of the Conference, Abr. Schellenberg, as well as the editor, J. F. Harms, spoke in favor of unifying our publication efforts, enlarging the Zionsbote, adding a bookstore. (The Conference decided): That the Brethren H. P. Schroeder, Cornelius Huebert, and Peter Regier, as publication committee, look into the matter and take further steps in its implementation, and also the enlargement of the Zionsbote. GCY, 1900, pp. 230, 231.

1901

Note. The publications committee reported its findings in 1901; namely, that the Brethren J. F. Harms, P. F. Duerksen and H. H. Neufeld are willing to turn their publishing enterprises over to, and place their personal services at the disposal of the
Conference. The delegation favored that the publication committee negotiate with the brethren who are engaged in publication, and attempt to unite the efforts provisionally, and seek to gather voluntary contributions for working capital, in order to operate publication on a unified basis. (The Conference decided): (a) That the Zionsbote continue on its present basis, with an added insert. (b) That the committee gather funds, and that as soon as sufficient means are on hand, the (total) publication be accepted as a Conference endeavor. GCY, 4901, pp. 246, 247.

1902 — Zionsbote and Confession of Faith

(a) That the Zionshote with the added insert continue. (b) That our (American) revised confession of faith be accepted and published. (c) That Brother J. F. Harms be charged to publish it as an act of the Conference. GCY, 1902, p. 267.

1902

Note. Brother P. F. Duerksen was at this time still successfully publishing the Sunday school lessons, the “Sonntagschul Bote,” and the Kinderblatt,” as a private enterprise. The Conference expressed its approval and satisfaction over this ministry, and urged that all churches and stations make use of this Sunday school material. GCY, 1902, pp. 267, 268.

1903 — Buying Central Publishing Company

Note. Brother J. F. Harms reported that on the prevailing basis on which the Zionsbote has been published thus far, he cannot continue to publish it any longer, and thus turned it over to the Conference from whom he received the assignment 19 years ago. The publication committee recommended that the Conference establish a conference publishing house. In the discussion the delegates gave constant evidence of the necessity to provide a conference owned and operated publishing house; for otherwise the Zionsbote might discontinue which should be prevented under all circumstances. (The Conference decided): (a) That the publication committee meet with the members of the Central Publishing Company of Hillsboro, Kansas, who were present for consultation. (Upon request Brother P. F. Duerksen of the CPC explained the financial condition of this corporation and announced the readiness of the members to turn this publishing house over to the (M.B.) Conference. Those of the brethren who were members of the CPC offered to donate their shares to the Conference. When the question of accepting Central Publishing Company was put to the delegates, there still was hesitancy - Brother J. F. Harms stated that under such circumstances, he would no longer be able to devote his services to the ministry of publication. This resulted in a very serious reconsideration of the consequences that would result from the discontinuation of our literary endeavors, and thus a number of the brethren (delegates) expressed willingness to do their part to acquire a publishing house of our own. After this sentiment gained momentum, D. D. Ediger made the motion, which was accepted without opposition): (b) That the Conference accept the offer of the Central Publishing Company, and provide a committee of seven brethren who are to further implement the matter. (c) The general sentiment was that J. F. Harms remain editor of the Zionsbote. (d) Into the committee were elected David Dyck, Manitoba; Heinrich Voth, Minnesota; J. J. Kliewer, Nebraska; Johann Foth, H. P. Schroeder, David Buschman, Kansas; Peter Regier, Oklahoma.
1903 — Effort made to buy Central Publishing Company

Note. The Conference elected committee met after the Conference together with J. F. Harms and P. F. Duerksen and several other brethren and organized itself as follows: Johann Foth, chairman; H. P. Schroeder, asst. chairman; David Buschman, treasurer; Peter Regier, secretary. The committee decided to solicit in the home churches with a view of raising the necessary funds in 30 days to purchase the Central Publishing Company. The moneys were to be sent to David Buschman who was to publish the receipts in the Zionsbote. GCY, 1903, p. 291.

1904 — Purchase of CPC failed

Note. Brother Johann Foth, chairman of the publication committee reported that the purchase of Central Publishing Company did not materialize. That the churches favored that the Conference own its own publishing house, and to publish the Zionsbote according to the old format, which, however, seemed impractical. He also reported that $1,600 as had been estimated, was found insufficient to purchase machinery adequate for our publication needs. Besides, additional Russian letter type, plus other unforeseen materials had to be purchased. That several hundred dollars are needed for more type, and $300 for working capital. Also, that the publishing house be relocated so it is more convenient and less expensive for the brethren involved, to meet. (The Conference decided to leave matters as they were) and (a) That Brother Johann Foth, Ebenfeld, serve as chairman and Brother J. K. Hiebert, Ebenfeld, as treasurer for one year. (b) That Brother J. F. Harms remain editor of the Zionsbote. (c) That other matters be ordered by the (publication) committee. GCY, 1904, p. 316.

Note. Funds for facilities of the printing press were to be sent to J. K. Hiebert, and subscriptions for the papers, to J. F. Harms, Medford, Oklahoma. GCY, 1904, p. 317.

1905 — A debt-free printing house, and literature for Russian people

(a) That the Zionsbote continue in its present form and that appropriate ads be accepted for publication. (b) (General satisfaction was expressed in regard to the S.S. pamphlets, and decided) That the Brethren J. F. Duerksen and D. D. Bartel prepare and edit them in the future. (c) That Brother J. F. Harms be engaged as editor for another year with a salary of $500. (d) That the Conference appreciates the efforts of Brother J. F. Harms to have succeeded to establish for it a debt-free printing press and expresses its thanks. (e) That all donated funds for the bookstore be sent to J. K. Hiebert, Hillsboro, and payments for Zionsbote and Sunday school lessons leaflets and the like to J. F. Harms, Medford, Oklahoma. (Note. Brother Harms reported that up to this time there had been no capital for the bookstore, but that a brother had loaned $100 for Bibles, and that whoever desired to aid the ministry of publication had an opportunity in this manner. The chairman of the Conference recommended that books, Bibles and tracts be ordered from the [M.B.] publishing house since they could be obtained here as cheap as elsewhere). (f) (Regarding need for Christian literature for distribution among Russian Christians in America, which could be edited by Brother Herman Fast and printed in our publishing house, it was decided): That the delegates present this to their home churches and recommend an offering for this purpose. The money to be sent to Brother J. F. Harms. (g)
That the present publication committee serve another year. GCY, 1905, pp. 338, 339.

1905 — “Golos”

Note. The 1905 Conference delegation approved the production and publication of literature for Russian people in America, provided this endeavor would be approved by the churches of the Conference. The churches did approve it. The brethren J. F. Harms and Herman Fast (editor) started the publication of a periodical in the Russian language, and named it “Golos” (Voice) GCY, 1905, p. 339.

1906

At the 1906 Conference Brother Harms reported that the “Golos” was being well received by the Russian people. This was also verified by the Russian Brother Zahorodny who was present at the Conference. GCY, 1906, pp. 357, 358.

1906 — Thanksgiving offering subsidy, Sunday school lessons, and “Golos”

(a) That half of the Thanksgiving day offerings by the churches go for the support of the matter of publication, and the other half toward the production and publication of Christian literature for Russians. (b) That J. F. Duerksen and H. W. Lohrenz be requested to write the Sunday school lessons at the same rate of compensation (as heretofore) (Since D. D. Bartel requested to be relieved from his part of this assignment). (c) That the “Golos” (the monthly publication) continue and be enlarged if the finances permit, and that the subscription remain 25 cents per year, and that Brother Herman Fast continue as editor. GCY, 1906, pp. 357, 358.

1906 — Relocating the M.B. Publishing House

(a) That the printing office be moved from Medford, Oklahoma, to McPherson, Kansas (because there would be a greater income from job work). (b) That the publication committee be charged to look after the matter of finding an editor and the relocation of the publishing house. (Brother J. F. Harms had requested to be relieved, and negotiations were in process with Brother A. L. Schellenberg as editor). (c) That the following brethren be elected to order the matter of publications: J. F. Harms, editor; John Harms, chairman; J. 3. Wall, assistant; 3. K. Hiebert, treasurer; Abr. L. Schellenberg, secretary. GCY, 1906, pp. 359, 360.

1907

Note. It was reported in 1907 that Brother J. F. Harms had resigned as editor; that A. L. Schellenberg succeeded as editor. That the printing office had been moved to McPherson, Kansas, and that the M.B. Publishing House was in good condition. GCY, 1907, p. 376.

1907 — 1907 Publication resolutions

(a) That an offering be gathered as compensation still due Brother J. F. Harms. (The offering amounted to $108.45). (b) That funds to the amount of $1.00 per capita be gathered in the churches to pay for the purchase of the building (for the publishing house in McPherson) and that the delegates cordially present this matter to the churches. (c) That since Brother J. F. Duerksen is no longer able to write his share of the Sunday school lessons, Brother N. N. Hiebert be nominated to take his place. (d) That the “Golos” continue, and that a standard typewriter be provided for editor Herman
Fast, to lighten his work. (e) That all moneys for the matter of publication be sent to editor A. L. Schellenberg. (f) That one half of the Thanksgiving Day offering be designated for the “Golos” and the other half for city missions. GCY, 1907, pp. 376-378.

1908 — Appreciation to new editor, “Golos” in question

(a) That a thank you be extended to the editor, and that his work receive approval. (b) Thai. Brother A. L. Schellenberg be again engaged as editor of the Zionsbote. (c) That since Brother H. W. Lohrenz has requested to be relieved from his assignment to write part of the Sunday school lessons, Brother N. N. Hiebert be engaged as editor of the S.S. lessons, and be given the liberty to choose assistants. (d) That since the future publication of the “Golos” is fraught with difficulties, one half of the Thanksgiving Day offerings in the churches be designated for distribution of Christian literature among the Russians, and, if possible, to continue the publication of the Golos, but to leave the (final) decision to the publication committee. GCY, 1908, p. 395.

1909 — “Golos” to continue if possible, change to three-year term

(a) That the conduct of the (publishing) business and the work of the Zionsbote be approved. (b) That (in spite of the difficulty of producing it) to continue the publication of the “Golos,” if at all possible. (c) That since the matter of publication will not come up for discussion until the next (triennial) conference, to elect (the following for three years) into the publication committee: Brother Johann Harms, chairman; J. J. Wall, assistant; J. K. Hiebert, secretary; and A. L. Schellenberg as manager. (d) To elect Brother N. N. Hiebert for three years as editor of the Sunday school lessons. (e) That the publication committee be given the liberty to relocate the publishing house (from McPherson) to another place, if it can be done without sustaining a financial loss to the Conference. (f) That Brother A. L. Schellenberg be re-elected as editor of the Zionsbote for three years. GCY, 1909, pp. 420, 421.

1912 — “Golos” has discontinued, relocation of publishing house left to committee

(a) That the administration of publications as reported by the manager be approved. (b) That those (church) members who have not paid $1.00 towards the publication of the Zionsbote do so during the current year (1912), and if this does not cover the deficit, that free-will offerings be gathered (in the churches) for this purpose. (c) That the $210.69 which is still in the treasury for the “Golos” (which had now been discontinued) be left in the treasury for the time being; that one half of the Thanksgiving Day offering be sent in to the publication committee towards providing Christian literature for the Russian people; and that the publication committee confer with the brethren in Canada to explore the possibility of publishing the “Golos” again. (d) That since Brother J. J. Wall wishes to withdraw) the Brethren A. J. Richert, J. K. Hiebert, and Johann Block be elected into the publication committee. (e) That A. L. Schellenberg be thanked for his work and (again) be elected as editor. (f) That Brother N. N. Hiebert be thanked for his work as editor of the Sunday school lessons and be reelected for this service, and that he be free to choose assistants. (g) That the matter of relocating the publication house be left to the publication committee in line with the 1909 Conference resolution (GCY, 1909, p. 421) GCY, 1912, pp. 441-443.
1913

Note. In 1913 the publishing house was relocated from McPherson to Hillsboro, and the Hillsboro Vorwaerts was purchased. In 1915 the publishing house moved into its newly constructed building. In 1939 the “Vorwaerts” was changed to the “Hillsboro Journal.” (Mennonite Encyclopedia, pp. 604, 605.)

1915 — Publication of the “Vorwaerts” to continue

(a) That the (publication) business together with the “Vorwaerts” be continued. (b) That A. J. Richert, J. K. Hiebert, and Johann Block be re-elected (to the publication committee). (c) That the “Golos” (discontinued since 1911) funds still in the hands of the publication committee, be utilized in the interests of the publication matter, and that the moneys which are on hand in Saskatchewan for this purpose, may be used to assist the Russian brethren (to help pay for their church building). (d) That Brother N. N. Hiebert be again elected editor of the Sunday school quarterlies. GCY, 1915, pp. 466-468.

1919

Note. Brother A. L. Schellenberg resigned as manager and editor of M .B. publications.

1919 — Editor Schellenberg and family honored, J. D. Fast new editor, J. F. Duerksen followed N. N. Hiebert as editor of the Sunday school quarterlies, price of Zionsbote and Vorwaerts raised to $1.50.

(a) That a word of thank you be conveyed to the entire A. L. Schellenberg family ... and that in love and appreciation a gift of $100 be transmitted to the family, because Brother Schellenberg devoted thirteen years of the best part of his life to the publication ministry. (b) To retain the managerial and editorial responsibility in one person. (c) To engage Brother J. D. Fast (who had served as assistant for several years) as manager and editor of publications. (d) That the issuing of the Zionsbote and the provision of devotional reports from the churches be left to the publication committee. (e) That the readers in Canada not request refunds for the time during which they did not receive the Zionsbote (which had been temporarily prohibited from circulation in Canada during war time). (f) That the subscription price of the Zionsbote and the Vorwaerts each be raised to $1.50 (per year). Whoever paid in advance, need not pay the raise for the unexpired time. (g) That the Conference thank Brother N. N. Hiebert for his ministry with the Sunday school lessons (1907-1919), but since he is overloaded with work, to accept his resignation. (h) That Brother J. F. Duerksen be engaged as editor of the Sunday school quarterlies. GCY, 1919, pp. 497, 498.

1921 — Bookstore, special articles and correspondents for Zionsbote

(a) That in order to expand its business, the publishing house be authorized to add a bookstore. (b) That the new publication committee employ an additional person to benefit the publication endeavor. (c) That the editor be authorized to request various persons to write special articles of a devotional and inspirational nature for the Zionsbote, but (with the safeguard) that the general participation of other persons from all the churches not be diminished thereby. (d) That every church have a correspondent for the “Zionshote”; and another person who receives a list of subscribers (from the publishing house) who are in arrears, who
collects subscription money, solicits new subscribers, and in that manner represents the publications endeavor. GCY, 1921, pp. 47, 48.

1924

Note. In 1922 Brother A. L. Schellenberg was called back to serve as editor and manager of M.B. publications. Brother J. F. Harms again edited the major part of the Zionsbote, and Brother P. H. Berg, besides assisting as manager, had charge of the bookstore.

1924 — Publication manager and the committee

(a) That A. L. Schellenberg serve another three years as manager. (b) That the present publication committee (A. J. Richert, J. K. Hiebert, and Johann Block) serve another three years. (The editor also member of the committee). GCY, 1924, p. 48.

1924 — Sunday school committee created (See Sunday school).

Note. Up to 1924 the matter of the S.S. lessons had been dealt with as part of publications. The production and selection of the material had been the responsibility of the Sunday school lesson editor or editors under the sanction of the publication committee. In 1924 a Sunday school committee of nine members was created, (refer to S.S.). This committee apparently did not function, since there is no report by it at the next (1927) Conference, nor was such a committee re-elected. The matter of the publication of Sunday school materials therefore remained with the publication committee and the editor of the Sunday school quarterlies. GCY, 1924, pp. 47, 48.

1927 — A. L. Schellenberg again elected editor and manager

(a) That six candidates be nominated (for the publication committee election). (The following were elected, J. K. Hiebert, H. J. Pankratz, and J. K. Warkentin). (b) That by acclamation A. L. Schellenberg be elected as manager for three years. GCY, 1927, p. 41.

1930 — Resignation of A. L. Schellenberg accepted

(a) That the M.B. Conference finds that the accusations of the Brother, editor and manager serving up to the time of this Conference, are not valid, and sorrowfully regrets that publication of the same (in Zionsbote No. 21, 1930) was not in the spirit of the Lord Jesus. (b) That the Conference recognizes the demonstrated business efficiency of Brother A. L. Schellenberg as is evidenced by the financial development of the Publishing House, but sorrowfully regrets his unbrotherly and hostile attitude during the last period of his service, as was expressed among others in his final words. The Conference considers his final statement in Zionsbote No. 21, as a definite resignation (from his office) and decides to accept the same, going into effect immediately. (c) That we as a Conference interpret the paragraph regarding control and management of the publishing house to mean, that the administration is a matter of the whole (publishing) committee, and that neither the manager nor any other one person of the committee has the authority to make single-handed decisions in weighty (principal) questions. GCY, 1930, p. 44.

1930 — P. H. Berg chosen editor and manager

That since Brother P. H. Berg has been actively connected with publications as assistant manager and manager of the bookstore since 1922, and during recent
years has conducted the entire business with success, that he serve as editor and manager until the next (1933) Conference. GCY, 1930, p. 44.

1930 — New youth magazine proposed

(a) That a four-page periodical be initiated in the interests of Sunday school and our youth, in order to keep our youth informed on the activities of our churches, young peoples societies, and our missions, and to foster and promote the spiritual life of our young people. (b) That the proposed young people’s periodical appear equally in two languages. (c) That the further implementation be left to the (publication) committee. GCY, 1930, p. 45.

1930 — Surplus to go for education

(a) That any surplus in the publication treasury be applied towards home missions in general, and more particularly toward education and schools; this, however, not in a measure that would hinder the (publication) business or prevent and impede necessary expansion. GCY, 1930, p. 45.

1930 — Publication committee elected by ballot

That the publication committee be elected by nomination and ballot. (Result of election: J. K. Hiebert, H. J. Pankratz, Herman Rogalsky. The editor remained a member of this committee). GCY, 1930, p. 45.

1930 — Regarding enlargement of Zionsbote content

That the Conference recommend to the new manager together with the publication committee, that if possible to make the content of the Zionsbote more comprehensive, and if feasible, to add one or another department. The details to be left to the brethren (of the management and committee). GCY, 1930, p. 45.

1933 — Expansion postponed, assets reappraised, manager and committee re-elected

(a) That though perhaps desirable to enlarge the (publication) business in several directions, including the establishment of a small book bindery, but because of the uncertain (economic) conditions, to postpone expansion for the time being, and operate the publishing endeavor on the basis on which it has been carried on during the past several years. (b) That for at least the following Conference interim, we retain the office of manager and editor in one person as provided by our present Conference statutes. Otherwise greater operating costs would be incurred, and we recommend to economize. (c) That Brother P. H. Berg, who has shown himself tried and approved during his long years of service, be again engaged as Conference editor and manager for the next Conference term of three years. (d) That in the light of prevailing conditions the assets of the M.B. Publishing House be re-appraised downward from a total of $52,650.74 to $31,317.93. (e) That we thank the publication committee and the entire staff of the publishing house for their faithful service during the past Conference term. (f) That the publication committee, Brother Herman Rogalsky, Brother J. K. Warkentin, and Brother H. J. Pankratz, be re-elected for three years. GCY, 1933, pp. 50, 51.

1933 — Sunday school editor re-elected

That Brother N. N. Hiebert be re-elected for another term of three years. GCY, 1933, p.
1936 — English periodical proposed. Birth of Christian Leader

That in view of the fact that the language issue is becoming constantly more acute in our Conference churches, and (because) it is our desire to supply our youth with appropriate literature, but on the other hand also (wish) to accommodate our older brethren and sisters . . . that the Conference earnestly evaluate whether it is not timely to publish a paper in the English language. (first) temporarily once a month, later probably more often, in the size of the Zionsbote, with the same number of pages, in order to meet the needs of our English speaking young people . . . and at the same time to request our conference people to help promote this effort by sending in numerous subscriptions for this (new) paper. GCY, 1936, p. 39.

1936 — A Sunday school committee (again) elected

That the Conference elect a committee to promote the Sunday school work in our Conference, and which together with the (publication) manager plan to achieve uniform procedure in the ordering of Sunday school lessons for the younger classes, and for Sunday school literature as a whole. The committee to recommend the best and most suitable (material) available on the market, insofar as it cannot be produced by our own publishing house, and the Conference churches should then abide by the recommendation of the committee in ordering this material. GCY, 1936, p. 39. (See S.S. p. 223).

1936

Note. The revised constitution adopted in 1936 called for a committee for publications consisting of five members, including the business manager; all five to be elected by the Conference. M .B. Constitution, 1936, pp. 32, 33.

1936 — Election of manager and committee for publications

(a) That Brother P. H. Berg again be elected as business manager and Conference editor for an additional term of three years. (b) That into the committee for publications the following brethren be elected for a conference term of three years: Herman Rogalsky, P. E. Schellenberg, H. J. Pankratz, and Adam Ross. GCY, 1936, p. 51.

1939 — English section added to “Vorwaerts”

That because of the need of an English paper for the community, something be done in this respect: either the publication of an eight-page paper in the English language, or that in the local section of the “Vorwaerts” pages 1,4,5, and 8 appear in the English, and the other four pages in the German. The general issue of the “Vorwaerts” to remain basically in the German as heretofore. This (change) would be a great accommodation to our business people and result in greater income from ads. GCY, 1939, p. 20.

1939 — Sunday school quarterly in English

That in regard to an English Sunday school quarterly for the younger classes, to publish a 64-page Sunday school quarterly containing only one “introduction,” one text, based on a graded adaptation of the International lessons, but containing three expositions for pupils of the primary, junior, and senior departments respectively. The
expositions (are) to be written by three different persons in order to achieve greater scope. We recognize this as an urgent need for the sake of achieving more uniformity in the Sunday school work. (B. J. Braun, P. N. Hiebert, and Mrs. Sam G. Pankratz were engaged by the publication committee as editors). GCY, 1939, p. 20.

1939 — Election of editor, manager and committee

(a) That we accept the recommendation of the publication committee to engage Brother P. H. Berg as manager for another three years. (b) That the engagement of an editor for the Zionsbote be left to the publication committee. (c) That (as a result of the election) the Brethren H. J. Pankratz, D.C. Eitzen, Adam Ross and P. E. Schellenberg serve in the publication committee. GCY, 1939, p. 21.

1939 — Traveling secretary

That (in regard to a secretary traveling in the constituency to represent the various Conference endeavors) the choice of a brother to serve as traveling secretary be left to the board of trustees, the school committee, and the publication committee, since he is primarily to represent the interests of these three branches (of Conference endeavors). GCY, 1939, pp. 21 and 59.

1939 — Sunday school committee and editor
(See Sunday school) GCY, 1939, p. 21.

1943—Note

In 1939 the name of the "Vorwaerts" was changed to "Hillsboro Journal" and became a bilingual paper appearing weekly in the same form to local as well as outside readers. In 1941 Brother Orlando Harms was added to the staff as assistant manager and editor of the Journal, serving in that capacity until 1946.

1943 - Subscription prices raised
(a) That the Hillsboro Journal be raised in price from $1.50 to $2.00. (b) That the price of the Christian Leader be raised from $0.50 to $1.00. (c) That the prices go into effect July 1, 1943. (d) That the price of the Zionsbote remain as before ($1.50). (e) That the price of the "Lektionshefte" and the graded Sunday school lessons be raised somewhat in order that the Sunday school editors and writers can be given better compensation. GCY, 1943, p. 55.

1943—Election of manager, editor, board
(a) That the present incumbent, Brother P. H. Berg, be reelected as manager of the M.B. Publishing House for another Conference term. (b) That because of the pressing uncertain conditions... the manager of the M.B. Publishing House (also serve as editor of the Zionsbote. (c) That the following serve in the publication committee: B. F. Wall, D. C. Eitzen, H. J. Pankratz, and J. K. Warkentin. GCY, 1943, p. 55.

1943 – Sunday school editors
(See Sunday school) GCY, 1943, p. 55.

1943 - Sunday School Committee
(See Sunday school) GCY, 1943, p. 55.

1943 - Sunday school recommendations
(See Sunday school) GCY, 1943, pp. 56, 57.

1945 - Improvement of plant, printing tracts
That the committee be authorized to make such improvements and changes in the plant and function of the publication as it deems necessary and advisable for the best service of our constituency even to the extent of printing tracts, etc., for free distribution. GCY, 1945, p. 65.

1945 - Zionsbote to continue in the German language

That we continue to publish the *Zionsbote* as much as conditions permit in the German language. GCY, 1945, p. 65.

1945 - "Christian Leader" becomes semi-monthly paper

That the change in the frequency of the publication of the "Christian Leader" from a monthly to a semi-monthly edition be made as soon as this can be carried out without too much interference. At the same time the subscription price of the Leader be changed from $1.00 to $1.50 per year. GCY, 1945, p. 65.

1945 - Election of editors and committee
I a) That Brother P. H. Berg be reelected to the office of manager of the publishing house and also as editor of the *Zionsbote* for another Conference term of about three years. (b) That Brother H. P. Toews be elected as editor of the Lektionshefte. Ic) That the Brethren B. J. Braun, P. N. Hiebert, and Sister S. G. Pankratz be reelected to write the Sunday school lessons, graded series. (d) That the following be elected into the publication committee: J. K. Warkentin, H. J. Pankratz, D. C. Eitzen, B. F. Wall. GCY, 1945, pp. 65, 66.

1948 - Zionsbote to carry some English

That we continue to publish the *Zionsbote*, as much as conditions permit, in the German language. This should, however, not bar obituaries and missionary reports written in the English language. GCY, 1948, p. 88.

1948 - Election of manager, editor, and committee
(a) That Brother A. J. Voth be elected to the position of manager. (b) That Brother P. H. Berg be elected to the position of editor of the *Zionsbote*. (c) That the following be elected into the publication committee: A. W. Epp, H. B. Kliewer, Elmo Warkentin, H. F. Klassen. GCY, 1948, p. 89.

1951 – New equipment

That the board of publications be authorized to spend approximately $20,000 within the next three years for securing new or rebuilt equipment to replace the present worn out and obsolete equipment and also be empowered to finance the purchase if necessary. GCY, 1951, p. 82.

1951—Zionsbote

That we continue to publish the *Zionsbote* as our Conference German language paper. GCY, 1951, p. 82.

1951 — “Christian Leader”

(a) That we are not now doing justice to our English speaking constituency in providing
an adequate English weekly Conference paper and that it is in order for the Conference to consider publishing such an organ. (b) That as soon as arrangements can be made and conditions permit, we begin to publish an English language weekly paper. This organ to be implemented by January 1, 1952, if possible. (c) That the “Christian Leader” be regarded as the official English language Conference paper until the above organ materializes, and that . . . the “Christian Leader”,.., be incorporated into the proposed English weekly in the form of a youth section. (d) That the publication board be authorized to secure full time editorial help as needed. GCY, 1951, p. 82.

1951 — “Hillsboro Journal”

That we as a Conference are no longer justified in publishing the “Hillsboro Journal” for the following reasons: (a) The publication of the organ takes too much staff time to justify its continuation. (b) This staff time can be better utilized for other Conference publications and Conference work. (c) That, therefore, disposition of the Hillsboro Journal be made. GCY, 1951, p. 82.

1951 - Conference papers to be placed into every home

That the board of publications be encouraged to find ways and means of making it possible for our Conference organs to be placed in every home of our church constituency. GCY, 1951, p. 83.

1951 — Management

That the present administrative and editorial staff (A. J. Voth, manager, P. H. Berg, editor of the Zionsbote, and the Sunday school lesson staff) be retained in their respective positions until such time when the newly-elected board of publications will make further arrangements, but at least until the end of the current fiscal year which ends September 30, 1951. GCY, 1951, p. 83.

1951

Note. At this time a revision of the Conference constitution was in progress. Inline with the enlargement of the membership of the board of publications called for in the proposed constitution, the following seven members were elected: Elmo Warkentin, A. W. Epp, P. E. Schellenberg, H. F. Klassen, Sam Wiens, Dan Penner, H. P. Toews. GCY, 1951, pp. 219, 220.

1954 — Zionsbote and missions issue

That the Zionsbote continue to be issued as a weekly paper and that a monthly “missions issue” be produced, provided that satisfactory arrangements can be made with the Board of Foreign Missions and with Canada. GCY, 1954, pp. 71, 72.

1954 — “Christian Leader” to continue as bi-weekly publication

That the “Christian Leader” continue as a bi-weekly publication and that changing it to a weekly publication with a corresponding increase in subscription price be postponed until the subscriptions reach approximately 3,500. GCY, 1954, pp. 71, 72.

1954 — “Lektionsheft” and “Adult Quarterly”

That the German “Lektionsheft” and the “Adult Quarterly” be continued as they appear at the present time… including the items of (a) editors, (b) arrangements, and (c) languages… and translating the materials from the present Adult Quarterly into the

1954 — Fund for book publication

That the M.B. Publishing House establish a fund for the purpose of providing aid in the preparation and printing of books, and receive gifts for this fund. GCY, 1954, pp. 71, 72.

1954 — Vote of thanks to editor P. H. Berg

That, as a Conference, we show our appreciation to Brother P. H. Berg, who has worked for 32 years in the publication field of our Conference, by giving him a vote of thanks. GCY, 1954, p. 72.

1954

Note. Administration and board of publications. Beginning with the 1951 provisional constitution, the manager and editors were engaged by the board of publications, not by the Conference as heretofore, and were no longer members of the publication board. During the interim of change from Conference election to board appointment, the management of the M.B. Publishing House changed as follows: A. J. Voth, manager, September 2, 1948 to November 10, 1952; P. H. Berg, November 10, 1952 to January 1, 1953; J. J. Gerbrandt, January 1, 1953 to January 1, 1954; Orlando Harms, January 1, 1954—. The board of publications elected in 1954 was as follows: H. B. Kliewer, D. C. Eitzen, Roy Just, H. F. Klassen, Dan S. Penner, C. E. Fast, Sam Wiens. GCY, 1954, pp. 65 and 188.

1957 — Publishing House deficit to be reimbursed by Board of Trustees

That since the Conference ordered the M.B. Publishing House to print the Conference periodicals at a loss, that the Conference through its Board of Trustees assist the publishing house to the amount of $5,000. GCY, 1957, p. 20.

1957 — Importance of publications

That because of the importance of publications and realizing also that our periodicals and writings tend to become a matter which is easily taken for granted, we believe it necessary to remind ourselves that the Conference, the Board of Publications and the Publishing House must each be vigilant that our publication service fulfills its obligations toward God and man.… GCY, 1957, p. 62.

1957 — Unifying the publication work

That for the sake of unifying the publication work of our General Conference, and to avoid unnecessary duplication and to serve the Conference and the Kingdom of God more effectively—efficiently and economically… that we strive toward the amalgamation of the M.B. Publishing House at Hillsboro and the Christian Press Limited, Winnipeg, into one publication effort of our General Conference, operating at the present at two locations, to be administered by a representative board from the U.S.A. and Canada. GCY, 1957, p. 62.

1957 — Official Conference paper for each home

That ways and means be found cooperatively with the Canadian Conference whereby an official English or German organ of our General Conference be gotten into every home of our constituency in the
U.S. and Canada, as a unifying link for our entire General Conference. GCY, 1957, p. 62.

1957 — Responsibility to produce adequate literature

That realizing the need and our responsibility before God and our Conference for sponsoring and producing literature within our Conference for young people, Christian nurture, missionary and evangelistic outreach, and in many other areas, ... efforts towards meeting these needs be begun as soon as sufficient operating capital is on hand. GCY, 1957, pp. 62, 63.

1957 — Prayer and other support

That the Conference go on record to support the publication work in prayer and in any other ways possible. GCY, 1957, p. 63.

1957 — Vote of appreciation to David Letkeman

That the Conference give a vote of appreciation and gratitude to Brother David Letkeman for his ten years of service as editor of the Adult Quarterly. GCY, 1957, p. 63.

1957 — Zionsbote and Christian Leader changes

(a) That beginning with January 1,1958, the Zionsbote be produced as a 16-page bi-weekly periodical instead of a weekly periodical at the present subscription rate of $2.50 per year. This move is being planned to avoid a printing deficit on the Zionsbote as much as possible. (b) That beginning with January 1, 1958, the “Christian Leader” be produced as a 24-page bi-weekly periodical instead of a 16-page and that the subscription rate be $3.00 per year. GCY, 1957, p. 63.

1957 — Board of publications

That the following be elected: D. C. Eitzen, 6 years; L. J. Franz, 6 years; Walter Wiebe, 3 years, at large; Marion Kliewer, 3 years, serving out the unexpired term of Brother Clarence Fast who resigned from the board. GCY, 1957, p. 63.

1960 — Merger of “Christian Leader” and “Christian Witness”

That in view of the merger of the two Conferences, the M.B. “Christian Leader” and the K.M.B. “Christian Witness” be merged into one periodical as of January 1, 1961, to serve the needs and interests of the merged body. GCY, 1960, p. 114.

1960 — Recommendation regarding unification by Board of Reference and Counsel

(After having heard the requests from the General Conference Board of Publications and the Canadian Board of Reference and Counsel) The Board of Reference and Counsel (a) Reaffirms the position taken at the Yarrow Conference in 1957 with reference to a unified program in publication (GCY, 1957, p. 62). (b) To implement this unified program the Board of Reference and Counsel recommends: (1) That the Board of Reference and Counsel of the General Conference meet with the present Board of Publication and the Canadian Board of Publication and work out suggestive steps leading to a united voice in one Conference periodical. (2) That the findings and a definite program leading to the above-mentioned objective be presented to the Canadian and U.S. Conferences in session in 1961. (3) That the news releases of General
Conference interest be made available to both the M.B. Publishing House in Hillsboro, Kansas, and the Christian Press at Winnipeg. GCY, 1960, p. 115.

**1960 — Election of board members**

That the following brethren be elected to the Board of Publications: David Ewert, Canada; Marion Kliwer, Dan S. Penner, Vernon Wiebe, U.S.A.; Walter Wiebe, at large. GCY, 1960, p. 115.

**1963 — Relinquishment of Canadian Conference equity in M.B. Publishing House at Hillsboro**

That, since the Committee of Reference and Counsel of the Canadian Conference recommends two independent publishing houses of the areas, one in Hillsboro, Kansas, and one in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and since the Canadian Conference has accepted this recommendation, the Conference… relinquishes its share in the Hillsboro publishing house… And the (Canadian) Conference renounces its share in the publishing house at Hillsboro and recognizes it as the property of the U.S. area (Conference) in the future. In this way each area… (has) its own publishing house. GCY, 1963, p. 39.

**1963 — Acceptance by U.S. Conference of M.B. Publishing House at Hillsboro**

That, whereas, at the 1961 convention the U.S. Conference accepted the General Conference Board of Reference and Counsel recommendation that there be a United States publication committee to operate the future U.S. Conference-owned publishing house in Hillsboro, and, that, whereas, the transfer of the Hillsboro publishing house to the U.S. Conference is envisioned as being finalized at the 1963 General Conference session: (that, therefore) the U.S. Conference declares itself willing to accept the M.B. Publishing House of Hillsboro… offered through the proper channels, and… pledges… prayerful support of the Canadian publication interests and trusts . . . (the) brethren from Canada will find it in (their) hearts to intercede on our behalf as well. GCY, 1963, pp. 39, 40.

**1963 — Christian Literature Commission**

That, inasmuch as there is a great need at home and abroad for the production of appropriate Christian literature in the form of books, pamphlets, etc., and inasmuch as the printed page is of tremendous influence in the world today, and inasmuch as proper literature offers a great opportunity to represent our Mennonite Brethren faith and church and to promote the purpose and program of our Conference… there be appointed… by the Board of Reference and Counsel a five man commission to study the establishment, organization and function of a Christian Literature Board and to report to the Board of Reference and Counsel before the next General Conference session. GCY, 1963, p. 41.

**1963 — Zionsbote termination**

That the General Conference publish the Zionsbote until January 1, 1965, at which time all remaining subscriptions be transferred to the “Mennonitische Rundschau.” GCY, 1963, p. 138.

**1963 — Vote of thanks to editor, Orlando Harms**

That (the Conference) give Brother Orlando Harms, who has faithfully served the Conference for many years (under General Conference, Jan. 1, 1954 to January 1, 1965), a vote of thanks by asking the

RACE RELATIONS

1963 — Race relations

That the Mennonite Brethren Church declare its position on race relations at the General Conference, assembled at Winnipeg, Manitoba, on August 3-7, 1963, to this effect:

Whereas, every redeemed individual regardless of race or ethnic origin, is most precious in the sight of God; and, whereas it is the duty and desire of the church to bring the gospel to all people in order to win them for Christ; and, whereas, the church will measure its task and opportunities in the light of our Lord’s imminent return to judgment, and will hold itself accountable to its Lord, looking forward to the great day of His appearing when men of all nations and kindreds and tongues shall gather around His throne and praise Him eternally for having washed their sin-stained “robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Rev. 7:14); that, therefore be it resolved:

1. That the Mennonite Brethren Church affirm its adherence to and application of the Scriptural principles concerning race relations and church work, to wit: (a) “God will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4). (b) His plan of salvation embraces the world. “God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). “He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2). (c) God’s grace in Christ Jesus should be proclaimed to all nations in accordance with the Savior’s Great Commission to His church: “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). “Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth” (Acts 1:8). (d) In the execution of Christ’s command, viz. “to preach the gospel to every creature” no line of demarcation should be drawn relative to nationality, race, color, “for there is no respect of persons with God” (Rom. 2:11, Eph. 6:9, Col. 3:25, Acts 10:34). (e) The Christian Church is the recipient of Christ’s injunction to “teach the nations to observe all things whatsoever He has commanded.” Not only did Christ instruct his church to “teach all nations,” but also to “baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost” (Matt. 28:19, 20). (f) The church’s chief function and task is to spread the news of Christ and His salvation to men, women, and children, irrespective of any national or race makeup, so that souls may be won for and retained with Christ, in whom alone they “have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Eph. 1:17).

2. That in all problems which arise in connection with the application and conduct of these above-mentioned principles of Scripture, all members of our church unreservedly obey the Savior’s command “that ye love one another” and practice Christian charity, forbearance and understanding with each other, knowing that the same Lord is Head over all, and that His Spirit dwells in all the churches.

3. (a) That all congregations of the Mennonite Brethren Conference regard all persons regardless of race or ethnic origin living within the limits of their respective parishes as individuals whom God would reach with the gospel of His saving grace through the ministry of the local congregation. (b) That congregations operating in changing communities be encouraged to continue operations in those areas rather than relinquish their properties.
through sale to other denominations, and
that the various district mission boards be
encouraged to help these congregations
when this becomes necessary, so that the
souls in those communities, regardless of
race or ethnic origin, may be won and
served.
(c) That conference institutions, agencies,
and offices make no distinction based on
race or color in their entrance requirements
or employment policies.
4. That since Christians are constrained to
do justice and to love mercy, we
acknowledge our responsibility as a church
to provide guidance for our members to
work in the capacity of Christian citizens for
the elimination of discrimination wherever it
may exist in community, city, state, nation,
and the world. GCY, 1963, pp. 42, 43.

RECORDS, SAFEKEEPING OF
CONFERENCE

1951 — Safekeeping of Conference
records

That all records of the various committees
of our Conference, dating as far back as
records are available, be placed in
permanent file in a vault of the Conference
office building in Hillsboro, Kansas. The
files are to be accessible only to the
respective committees and to those who
shall have permission from such
committees. The Board of Trustees shall
provide that the records sent in by the
various committees be properly filed.
GCY, 1951, p. 122.

REFERENCE AND COUNSEL

1927 — Committee of Reference and
Counsel created

That the Conference elect a committee of
reference and counsel which considers the
questions addressed to the Conference, and
then offers counsel and makes
recommendations to the Conference. (Nine
brethren were elected as follows: P. E.
Nickel, Herman A. Neufeld, J. F. 1-larms,
H. H. Flaming, Johann Siemens, P. P.
Rempel, Ludwig Seibel, B. J. Friesen, H. S.

1930 — Temporary committee of
reference and counsel nominated

That a committee of reference and counsel
of nine brethren be nominated which
examines the questions handed in, and than
assists the Conference in the answering of
them by offering counseling recommenda-
tions. (Nine brethren were appointed: J. J.
Wiebe, Gerh. Wiens, P. E. Nickel, H. S.
Voth, W. J. Bestvater, N. N. Hiebert, David
Dyck, D. C. Eitzen, B. B. Janz). GCY, 1930,
pp. 53, 54, and 64.

1933 - Report accepted, and election

(a) The report by the committee of reference
and counsel was accepted. (b) The following
three brethren were elected for nine years:
W. J. Bestvater, B. B. Janz, and A. H.
Unruh. GCY, 1933, pp. 65, 66 and 69.
1936 — Work of committee accepted, and election

(a) The report and the work of the committee of reference and counsel were accepted. (b) Five brethren were elected for a term of three years: David Hooge, P. E. Nickel, B. B. Janz, H. D. Wiebe, W. J. Bestvater. GCY, 1936, pp. 67-69 and 72.

1936

Note. The adoption by the Conference of the 1936 constitution changed the membership composition to five elected brethren who together with the three elected officers of the Conference (chairman, assistant chairman, and secretary) constituted the committee of reference and counsel of eight members. Constitution, 1936, p. 15.

1939 — Guiding principles to be worked out by special committee

(a) That the newly elected committee of reference and counsel elect a (special) committee to prepare guiding principles in German and English by which young ministers may be directed (when officiating) at weddings, dedications, communion services, and other sacred performances. (b) That the following brethren be elected by acclamation: A. H. Unruh, P. E. Nickel, B. B. Janz, H. D. Wiebe, W. J. Bestvater, who together with the officers of the Conference (G. B. Huebert, chairman, H. S. Voth, assistant chairman, A. A. Schroeter, secretary) form the committee of reference and counsel. GCY, 1939, pp. 58, 59 and 62.

1943 — Report and election

(a) The committee of reference and counsel made its 1943 report, pp. 72.76. (b) By ballot the following were elected: B. B. Janz, H. H. Janzen, H. D. Wiebe, A. H. Unruh, P. F. Wall. (The Conference officers elected were: H. W. Lohrenz, chairman, G. B. Huebert, assistant chairman, Orlando Harms, secretary.) GCY, 1943, pp. 72-76 and 79.

1945 — Report and election


1948 — Report and election


1951— Writing Conference history, polity, doctrine, history of missions

That the committee (of reference and counsel) initiate and supervise the writing and publishing of the following documents: (a) An official publication of the history of the Mennonite Brethren Church. (b) A treatise on the polity and practices of the Mennonite Brethren Church. (c) A publication of the Biblical doctrines of the Mennonite Brethren Church. (d) A history of the Missions of the Mennonite Brethren Church. GCY, 1951, p. 122.

1951 — Centennial commemoration
That the committee be charged with the preparation of the centennial commemoration… (See Centennial). GCY, 1951, p. 122.

1951 — A statement of “A frank analysis of our spiritual status.”


1951 — Report and election


1954 — Submitted questions, report, election

(With the provisional adoption of the 1954 constitution, the committee was given the official name of Board of Reference and Counsel and one half of the membership was elected for a term of six years, and the other half for three years. At each subsequent Conference only three members are elected for a term of six years. (a) Report of the board of reference and counsel recorded on pp. 18.23, 61, 97. (b) Election of the following brethren: B. J. Braun, R. M. Baerg, P. R. Lange, J. B. Toews, A. II. Unruh, J. A. Toews. Officers of the Conference: H. H. Janzen, chairman, Dan Friesen, assistant chairman, H. R. Wiens, secretary). GCY, 1954, 6-7, 18-23, 61, 97, 188.

1954 — Regarding (proposed) board of elders

(See also elders, pp. 61, 62) That in view of the reactions of all the district conferences (to Document No.3, “Board of Elders” as presented by the Committee of Reference and Counsel, General Conference Yearbook, 1951, pp. 130-133), the Conference order a revision of said document transferring the duties assigned to the (proposed) board of elders to the Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1954, p. 20.

1954 — Appointment of two members to program committee

That we (the Conference) ask the Board of Reference and Counsel to appoint the two members to the Conference program committee (for the interim). GCY, 1954, p. 139.

1957 — Report and election


1960 — Report and election

(a) Report of the Board of Reference and Counsel recorded on pp. 33-35, 46, 133, 135-136, 153-154. (b) At the 1960 Conference the following were elected for six years, to 1966: D. J. Pankratz, J. A. Toews, B. J. Braun; serving with R. M.
1963 — Expanded duties, report, election

(The 1963 constitution which became operative in 1964, not only changed the name of the Committee of Reference and Counsel to the Board of Reference and Counsel, but also expanded the duties of this Board. Constitution, 1963, pp. 31-33, 52-55. (a) Report of the Board of Reference and Counsel recorded on pp. 35-45, 98, 124, GCY, 1963. (b) At the 1963 Conference the following were elected for six years, to 1969, Dan Friesen, H. R. Wiens, H. H. Janzen; serving with D. J. Pankratz, B. J. Braun, J. A. Toews, whose terms to expire in 1966. GCY, 1963, pp. 35-45, 98, 124.

REHABILITATION

(See also General Welfare and Public Relations)

1945 — Rehabilitation of C.P.S. men

That we definitely proceed with the program of rehabilitating the young men that return from the service according to earlier adopted plans. GCY, 1945, p. 40.

1945 — Financial aid to C.P.S. men

That the General Welfare Committee be authorized to give financial assistance in the form of grants to C.P.S. men who left their education after discharge from government service but lack the means to (continue to) do so. The amount of the grant to be equal to the amount remitted in tuition and fees by any of the schools in the Conference extending educational aid to C.P.S. men. GCY, 1945, p. 40.

1945 — Mental Hospitals

That we favor the establishment by the Mennonite Central Committee of one or more convenient places to provide for the mentally ill of our brethren and sisters. GCY, 1945, p. 41.

1948 — Spiritual Gospel ministry to refugees

That we again authorize the (General Welfare) committee to send out one or two families or brethren for the express purpose of spiritual gospel ministry among the refugees and brethren. GCY, 1948, p. 67.

REPORTS, CONFERENCE

1883 — Publication of Conference minutes and resolutions

That in order to inform the churches of the resolutions and reports, it was decided to publish the 1883 Conference minutes through the “Rundschau.” (The “Rundschau” was at that time published in Elkhart, Indiana. Bernhard Pauls was the first M.B. Conference appointed editor, who was followed by J. F. Harms in 1884, who edited the “Mennonitische Rundschau” from his place of residence in Canada, Kansas.) History of the M.B. Church, J. F. Harms, pp. 263-265.) GCY, 1883, p. 13.

RESOLUTIONS REGARDING CHURCH POLITY

1936 — Revision and publication of former resolutions

(In regard to revision and publication of the
rules and regulations valid at the present pertaining to our church polity, with proper citation of Scripture, it was decided) That the Brethren P. E. Nickel, Hillsboro, J. J. Wiebe, Corn, and John Siemens compile the (former) Conference resolutions and publish them in the Zionsbote for open discussion. GCY, 1936, pp. 67, 68.

1945 — Composition of Conference rules (resolutions)

That a compilation of the Conference rules (and resolutions) be made and that sufficient copies be printed that not only the churches but as many of the members of our Conference as so desire can obtain copies. That this compilation be made and printed by the Publishing House of our Conference as soon as possible. GCY, 1945, p. 73.

SALARIES

1951 — Salaries to committee members

That Conference committees and boards receive no salary or honorariums for their time spent in traveling to and from, nor while attending committee meetings unless their income is seriously affected. GCY, 1951, p. 122.

SECRETARY OF THE CONFERENCE SPECIAL DUTY OF

1954 — Secretary to list financial obligations

That we ask the secretary to list in the (Conference) report book all the financial obligations that have been voted at this (1954) Conference for the churches and district conferences to take care of. GCY, 1954, p. 139.

SECRET SOCIETIES

1890 — Secret societies

That it is forbidden for members of Mennonite Brethren Churches to become members of secret societies. GCY, 1890, pp. 106, 107.

1945 — Secret societies

That, in view of the many unchristian practices of the secret lodges, such as horrible oaths, which members must take (to join), and because the name of our blessed Lord and Savior is omitted or rather excluded from them, we believe that the following Scripture references should shed sufficient light upon this question: 2 Cor. 6:14-18; Eph. 5:8-13; Matt. 5:33-37; James 5:15; Luke 5:4-6; John 3: 19-21; Matt. 12:48-50. GCY, 1945, p. 71.

SEMINARY (SEE ALSO “STUDY COMMISSION”)

1948 — Seminary commission

(a) That the Conference elect a commission to consider and study the practical aspect of an (M.B.) seminary. It was further moved that we elect a commission for this purpose in the manner our constitution prescribes for electing other committees. (b) That we elect two members from each district and consider the incoming Conference chairman a member of this commission. (The following were elected: Northern district, H. H. Nickel, A. A. Kroeker; Central district, H. E. Wiens, Dan E. Friesen; Southern district, J. W. Vogt, P. C. Hiebert; Pacific district, H. R. Wiens, Waldo Wiebe). GCY, 1948, p. 76.

1951 — Seminary question
(After the seminary commission elected in 1948 had given a report of its findings, GCY, 1951, pp. 118, 119, the Conference passed the following resolution): That for further investigation, the seminary question be submitted to the “Coordinating Committee” (See Education and GCY, 1951, p. 101) which in turn shall study it together with the Committee of Reference and Counsel and have the results of their findings referred to the district conferences for action. GCY, 1951, p.120.

1893 — Music magazine

(Brother Isaak Born, Russia, offered to edit his “Saenger-Zeitung” with notes for American readers and use, and asked for an advance of $150.00 in funds). The Conference decided: That the Conference cannot accede to this request, but recommends to singers in America that they subscribe to this periodical. GCY, 1893, p. 155.

1903 — Church hymnal

(With reference to a church hymnal) That the “Zions-Glaubensstimme” be recommended, and that churches send their orders to J. F. Harms (editor of the Zionsbote). GCY, 1903, p. 292.

1919 — “Saenger-Bote” and music

(In reply to the petition by the [Canadian M.B.] “Association of Singers” for the Conference to take over the production and publication of the Saenger-Bote. a monthly publication on church music, the Conference decided): (a) That the matter be reported to and deliberated on by the churches, and (b) That a decision on this matter be deferred until the next Conference. GCY, 1919, pp. 498-501.

1919

Note. The song book “Evangeliumslieder” had been introduced into Mennonite Brethren churches. It was used very generally by churches all over the Conference, and held its own until singing changed over into the English language. Whenever there is occasion for a service in the German language in Mennonite Brethren churches today (1963), the “Evangeliumslieder” is still used for the song service.

1921 — Saenger-Bote

(Regarding the Saenger-Bote) (a) That the Conference nominate a committee which together with the publication committee of the Conference deliberate over this matter, and, if possible, publish a periodical that will foster the ministry of music in our Conference churches. (b) That this committee assume the business affairs of the endeavor, in the appointment of an editor and associates, and look after the success of the periodical until the next Conference. (The members elected into the committee were: H. D. Wiebe, J. P. Wiebe, Aaron Sawatzky, 11. J. Pankratz, J. J. Franz). GCY, 1921, pp. 48, 49 and 76.

1924 — Report by music committee and resolutions

(The committee elected in 1921 gave an oral report emphasizing the need of [a] a music magazine, [b] diligent practice in hearty singing, and [c] a suitable church hymnal. The Conference decided): (a) That the Conference elect five brethren into a music committee (Komitee fuer Gesangessache) in order that we (M.B. Conference) may obtain a song book (hymnal) suited for our needs. (b) That the following brethren serve in the song book committee: H. D. Wiebe, J. P.

1927 — Report by music committee and resolution

(The music committee reported that the easiest course for the Conference would be to accept the “Neue Glaubensharfe” for our church hymnal). It was decided: That as Conference we recommend the “Neue Glaubensharfe” to our churches, though the examination of the song book and its adoption be left to the individual churches. (Note. The music committee was not re-elected). GCY, 1927, pp. 66 and 72.

1927

Note. For the next 18 years the matter of church music and a Conference hymnal received no attention on the General Conference level, nor did the Conference provide a special committee for this purpose during these years. In 1945, however, the Board of Reference and Counsel presented a thoroughgoing recommendation to the Conference which was adopted.

1945 — Production of M.B. Conference hymnal

(a) That we proceed energetically with the production of a song book with notes to satisfy the needs of our churches. (b) That the song book is to be composed of old choral, other old hymns, as well as good new hymns and songs. (c) That the following brethren form a committee for the selection, translation, and arranging of the songs: Ben Horch, Winnipeg, Manitoba; F. C. Thiessen, Abbotsford, B.C.; H. C. Richert, Hillsboro, Kansas; C. Wall, Mountain Lake, Minnesota; and H. D. Wiebe, Bakersfield, California. (d) That the individual churches notify the committee of the number of books each could use, so the committee can estimate the number of books to be printed. (e) That the various brethren and sisters remit their wishes regarding the songs, but the committee to make the final decision in the selection of them. (f) That the payment of the traveling expenses of the respective brethren to committee meetings be taken care of by the respective district conferences to which the brethren in the committee belong. (g) That the General Conference appoints Brother H. C. Richert as chairman of this committee and requests him to consult with the Brethren Ben Horch and F. C. Thiessen to acquaint himself with the advances which have been made there (in Canada) in this request. (h) That this songbook be produced in both the English and the German languages. GCY, 1945, p. 73.

1948 — Revision of plan for an English hymnal

(Since a complete German hymnal was being published in Canada, the Conference adopted the following revised resolution regarding an English church hymnal). (a) That we reconsider point “h” of the 1945 resolution, and proceed with the publication of an English song book, and (b) that we recognize the German hymnal produced by the Canadian M.B. Conference. GCY, 1948, p. 96.

1948 — Re purchase of hymnals

(a) That the churches in the States purchase German hymnals as needed. (b) And the same holding true in regards to English hymnals—that the Canadian brethren in turn purchase the English hymnals as they find need…. GCY, 1948, p. 97.
1948 — Revised committee membership

(a) That beside a committee there be a group who can with less difficulty and with as little expense as possible meet often. (b) That we authorize Brother H. C. Richert to appoint brethren to assist him in publishing an English hymnal. GCY, 1948, p. 97.

1948 — Hymnals for South American M.B. churches

That we recommend to the Committee of General Welfare and Public Relations to consider the need of the South American churches as to German hymnals and to act accordingly. GCY, 1948, p. 97.

1951 — Publication procedure of English hymnal

(The chairman, Brother H. C. Richert, reported that by authorization of the 1948 resolution the following hymnal committee had been formulated: Dr. P. C. Hiebert, chairman; Dr. L. J. Franz, secretary-treasurer; Brother A. J. Voth, member; Professor H. C. Richert, music editor; and presented the following resolutions which were adopted): (a) That Brother Richert with the committee be authorized to proceed with the publication of the M.B. Hymnal. (b) That the recommendation of a book containing 475 songs supplying the needs for the various church functions be accepted. (c) That the price of the book be kept as low as possible in order to make it widely available. $1.50 being suggested. (d) That a first edition of 5,000 copies be printed. (e) That advanced orders be received for the book from individuals, congregations and others, to be paid, if possible, in advance to furnish some capital for the preparation of the book. (f) That the Board of Trustees be authorized to advance the necessary funds for this so important Conference undertaking ... to be done on a loan basis with the prospect that money realized from the sale of the books be used to pay these loans. (g) To leave the selection of the name of the songbook to the discretion of the songbook committee. (h) That by acclamation the committee be re-elected and instructed to continue the work on the songbook. GCY, 1951, pp. 96-98.

1954 — M.B. Church Hymnal report

(The hymnal committee reported that the first edition of 7,500 copies was sold out; that a second edition was being printed; that financially the project had left the Conference treasury a balance of $1,113.39 plus the inventory of the music plates; and that the M.B. Publishing House was now handling its further production and marketing. The Conference decided): That the report (by the Hymnal Committee) be accepted with gratitude, and to extend to them, by a standing vote, a thank-you for the final hymnal they have compiled. GCY, 1954, pp. 93-96.

SOUTH AMERICAN (AREA) CONFERENCE

1948 — Acceptance of South American M.B. Conference

(a) That on the basis of Brother (B. B.) Janz’s report, the reorientated church policy and procedure, and the constitution of the churches of South America, we accept the churches of South America as a district conference of the Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America. (b) That we extend the hand of fellowship to the Brethren Gerhard H. Rosenfeld (Brazil) and Kornelius Voth (Paraguay), who are present at the Conference representing the churches of South America. GCY, 1948, p. 3.
Greeting to South American churches

That the following letter of greeting be sent to our brethren in South America through Brother Gerhard Balzer: (The Brethren John Pankratz and Isaac Tiessen to prepare the letter)

Gruss an die Gemeinden in Sued-Amerika: Die siebenundvierzigste Generalkonferenz der M.B. Gemeinden von Nord-Amerika in Yarrow, B.C., sendet unserer Bruederschaft in Sued-Amerika herzliche Gruesse mit Eph. 4, 15; ~Lasset uns aber rechtschaffen sein in der Liebe und wachsen in allen Stuecken an dem, der das Haupt ist, Christus.”


GCY, 1957, pp. 117, 118.

1879 — Sisters’ participation

That sisters may take part in church activities as the Holy Spirit leads. However, they should not preach nor take part in discussion in business meetings of the church. GCY, 1879, p. 4.

SPIRITUAL WELFARE (OF THE CONFERENCE)

1945 — Dangerous influences

That, when individuals, churches, or organizations believe that certain individuals, organizations, or institutions harbor danger to the welfare of the Brotherhood, they have the right to petition for an investigation. When a written petition of this nature is signed by not less than five brethren and presented to the Committee of Reference and Counsel, the case is examined and investigated by this committee. In case of a district conference matter, it is then referred to the committee of reference and counsel of the respective district, if there is one. In case of a General Conference matter the committee decides upon further procedure even to the extent of a public hearing before the Conference as a whole. GCY, 1945, p. 70.

1948 — Counsel in relation to doctrine and practice

That in consideration of the various spiritually disintegrating influences which are beginning to infiltrate our Conference, and in consideration of some positions of individual brethren and the churches in our Conference in relation to points of doctrine and practice, the Committee of Reference and Counsel considers itself responsible in accordance with (Constitution) Part II, Article VII, Section 2, (a), p. 30; and Part III, Article VII, A, paragraph 2, pp. 52-55; to call the following points of belief and practice to the special attention of the Conference for closer observation:

(a) Call and ordination of brethren. The call and ordination of brethren to the teaching ministry of the church should be carried
through in such a fashion and based on Biblical principles that the church may preserve the deep consciousness that the Holy Spirit has called and appointed the minister into the position of service.

~Ephesians 4:11.

Such appointment must be carried out in complete keeping with the teaching of the pastoral epistles of Paul. Where individual brethren have dedicated themselves as firstfruits to the ministry of the saints (1 Cor. 16:15), their service is not permitted to lead to any divisions within the church. (Rom. 16:17).

It is further necessary to consider that we do not call teachers of the Word from the churches outside of our Conference fellowship because they frequently hold teachings which we as a Mennonite Brethren Conference cannot endorse. It is further to be re-emphasized that all ordinations of ministers be carried out within keeping of the Conference policies as outlined in the resolution of the General (M.B.) Conference of 1933, which reads as follows: “The local church that wishes to ordain a brother should make its wish known to the representatives of the neighboring churches for their consideration and endorsement. Having received such endorsement the church will call some experienced brethren who have the confidence of our Conference to officiate at the ordination.”

According to a resolution passed by the General Conference in 1943, GCY, p. 76, our Conference does not recognize ordinations of other denominations in our churches with the exception of those of the K.M.B. Church. It is, therefore, necessary that all brethren who, after an acceptance as workers in our Conference, even though they may have been ordained by other conferences, be ordained according to rules and regulations of our own denomination.

(b) Appointed leadership. The appointed leadership in our churches should consist of brethren who have received their training in our own Conference and have proven themselves for a period of several years as true and faithful to the doctrine and policies of the Mennonite Brethren Church. In cases where brethren who do not meet the above qualifications are considered for appointment in our churches, the Committee recommends that such brethren be examined thoroughly as to their testimony of life, their doctrinal beliefs, and policies of church administration. Where a district conference has made no provision for an authorized body to take the responsibility for such examination it is advised that the Committee of Reference and Counsel of the respective district conference in which the church considering such appointment is located be charged with the responsibility of the examination. Only with the endorsement of the examining committee should the local church consider the appointment of such a brother.

(c) Ministers a gift of God. The church must be kept under the deep conviction that their ministers were given to them by God. Only then will the relationship of the members of the church to their teachers find its scriptural expression as stated in Hebrews 13:7 and 1 Thess. 5:12, 13.

When God gives a teacher unto a church He holds him in His hand (Rev. 1:16). Because of this relationship a church is not permitted to deal with a minister as with a hireling. Because of the responsibility of the minister before God and the church no servant of the Word and pastor of a church should be dismissed in response to such demand on the part of individual members of a church. Only after a church as a body has earnestly sought the will of God in relation to their leader and definite Scriptural reasons for the dismissal of the brother have become the conviction of the church should such steps be taken through the expression of a more or
less united vote of the church. Where a church finds it difficult to come to a clear
answer in the consideration of the relationship of this church towards their
minister, teacher, and pastor, it is advised that such a church call in experienced
spiritual brethren of the neighboring churches for the purpose of counsel and
guidance.
(d) Tendencies of the age. Because of tendencies in our days which in the name of
brotherhood frequently make light of the scriptural authority of the minister, the
Committee of Reference and Counsel warns against this spirit of the age which is in
direct opposition to the Word of God. In order to remain true to the principle of
Scripture in doctrine, walk, and practice it is necessary that we as a church maintain a
spiritual unity and obligate ourselves to the observance of the advice and guidance of
the Conference. Where a spirit of individualism enters into a church and finds
room for expression, it endangers to destroy all orders of the scriptural relationship of
interdependence and unity. We cannot evaluate the spiritual structure of a church
from the standpoint of the social or political democracy. Political concepts of methods
and practice when applied to the work of the church will invariably result in destructive
results.
Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. GCY, 1948, pp. 106,
107, 108.

STUDY COMMISSION

1957 — Study commission and assignment

That, inasmuch as the Mennonite Brethren Church holds to the cherished position that
the General Conference is the highest organizational unit of the Brotherhood, and
that the principle of consolidation and unification be applied in the structural and
functional organization of the Brotherhood, and since we recognize that six areas of
General Conference concerns, in particular, can be most adequately met on the General
Conference level, in which areas unification should be retained, these areas being in the
Board of Reference and Counsel, Board of Foreign Missions, Board of Trustees, Relief
and Welfare, Publication, and Higher Theological Education, i.e., on the seminary
level, the following (be provided):
(a) Study commission. That a commission of brethren be appointed by the Board of
Reference and Counsel, subject to the approval of the Conference, to investigate
and study the field of unification of our brotherhood, in specific areas, as delegated
by the Board of Reference and Counsel.
(b) Assignment of study commission. That this commission be charged with the
responsibility of reporting to the Board of Reference and Counsel the findings of their
studies and suggest definite lines of procedure which may furnish the basis for
the implementation of retaining and strengthening unification, and that the
recommendations in turn be made to the district conferences by the Board of
Reference and Counsel.
(c) Temporary limitation of educational expansion. That our district conferences,
both in the United States and in Canada, do not continue programs of expansion in the
area of higher education, in order not to create a situation which, because of
expanded enterprises might make retraction impossible, and thus hinder unification.

1957 — Study commission personnel

(a) That the following 10 brethren be appointed to serve on the Study Commission
on unification: Canada: H. J. Dick, Herman Lenzmann, Isaac Tieszen, P. H. Toews, and
Walter Wiebe. U.S.A.: E. J. Peters, Waldo Hiebert, G. H. Jantzen, C. N. Hiebert and G. S. Warkentin. (b) That the heads of those Conference enterprises, which are to be investigated for the purpose of unification, be co-opted into the study commission. (c) That Brother H. M. Baerg be appointed as chairman of the study commission on unification. He shall, however, not have voting power. (d) That if any members of the above named commission find it impossible to serve, replacements be appointed by the Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1957, pp. 117, 118.

SUNDAY SCHOOL (CHURCH SCHOOLS)

1874 to 1888

Note. Between the years of their earliest settlement in 1874 and 1888, the Sunday school had become a regular institution of the M.B. churches in America. Sunday school conventions were held to help promote this phase of the church’s ministry. A complete program, listing topics and speakers, of the Sunday school convention held on May 23, 1898, was published in three consecutive issues of the Zionsbote of 1898, Numbers 17, 19, 20. In the August 5 to September 21, 1898, Zionsbote, Numbers 31 to 38, editor J. F. Harms had prepared and published 20 lessons on Bible study for youth, adapted for Sunday school use. P. F. Duerksen, an early promoter of the Sunday school, published an article on Sunday school methods and hints for Sunday school teachers in Zionsbote Number 25, of 1899. But no regular Mennonite Brethren periodical on the Sunday school and the Sunday school lessons appeared until 1900, when “Der Sonntagsschul-Bote,” a monthly magazine, was published as a private enterprise by P. F. Duerksen and made available at a small price to all churches who subscribed to it in various quantities. The Sonntagsschul-Bote contained the Sunday school lessons for each Sunday of the month: listing the subject of the lesson (following the International” outline), giving the text from the Bible, an introduction, the golden text verse, an exposition on the lesson, questions adapted to children, and practical suggestions for the Christian life. In addition, the Sonntagsschul-Bote also carried articles and reports on Mennonite Brethren missions, on the church, on the Sunday school, etc. Zionsbote, 1898, Nu. 17, 19, 20; Nu. 31-38; 1899, Nu. 25; Sonntagsschul-Bote, 1900-1903.

1888 — Sunday school conventions

That the general sentiment (of the delegates) is in favor of strengthening the Sunday school, and to arrange for a Sunday school convention in the interests of the Sunday schools. The matter of the date and the program are left to the publication committee. GCY, 1888, p. 71.

1889 — The Sunday school

(In reply to the question as to whether the Conference would not be ready to proceed in a uniform manner in the matter of the Sunday school, it was decided): That this be referred to the Kansas Sunday School Convention, and that it publish its views on the matter in the Zionsbote. GCY, 1889, p. 89.

1900 — Sunday school lessons by Duerksen

(Brother P. F. Duerksen reported by letter that under the Lord’s blessings the editing of the “Sonntagsschul-Bote,” containing the Sunday school lessons, had proved a success.
during the past year, and that if the Conference would assume this endeavor, it would serve to encourage him. The Conference delegation favored the Sunday school publication, but was not ready to take it on as a Conference project). GCY, 1900, pp. 230, 231.

1902 — ‘Sonntagsschul-Bote” favored

(P. F. Duerksen was at this time still successfully publishing the “Sonntagsschul-Bote” and the ‘Kinderblatt” as a private undertaking). The Conference expressed its approval and satisfaction over this ministry, and urged that all churches and stations make use of the Sunday school materials. GCY, 1902, pp. 267, 268.

1903 – Sunday School lessons acceptable

(Duerksen reported that the Sunday school lessons published by him were being generally accepted and the publication of them paid for itself, but that the “Sonntagsschul-Bote” [magazine] in its smaller format did not carry itself financially. If every family would subscribe for the “Bote,” it would pay). GCY, 1903, p. 292.

1904 — Subscriptions to Sunday school lessons

That subscriptions (money) for the Sunday school lessons be sent to J. F. Harms (editor of Zionsbote, Medford, Oklahoma. GCY, 1904, p. 317.

1905 — New editors of Sunday school lessons

(After an expression of general satisfaction in regard to the Sunday school lessons, the Conference decided): (a) That the Brethren J. F. Duerksen and D. D. Bartel would also edit them in the future. (b) That subscription moneys for the Sunday school lessons be sent to J. F. Harms (editor of the Zionsbote) Medford. Oklahoma. GCY. 1905, pp. 338, 339.

1906 — Change in editors of Sunday school lessons

(The Conference expressed general satisfaction in regard to the Sunday school lessons. D. D. Bartel requested to be released from writing his part of the lessons). (a) That J. F. Duerksen and H. W. Lohrenz be requested to write the Sunday school lessons, and that they be given the same compensation as heretofore. (b) That the Conference, by a standing vote of the delegates, express its appreciation to the Brethren J. F. Duerksen and D. D. Bartel for their services. GCY, 1906, p. 357.

1907 — Change in editor of Sunday school lessons

(Since Brother d. F. Duerksen no longer finds it possible to edit his half of the Sunday school lessons): That Brother N. N. Hiebert take the place of Brother Duerksen, and together with Brother H. W. Lohrenz edit the Sunday school lessons. GCY, 1907, p. 377.

1908 — N. N. Hiebert editor of Sunday school lessons

(Since Brother H. W. Lohrenz requested to be released from writing his part of the Sunday school lessons), That Brother N. N. Hiebert be engaged as editor of the Sunday school lessons with the privilege of choosing assistants. GCY, 1908, p. 395.

1909 — Editor of Sunday school lessons

That Brother N. N. Hiebert be engaged for three years as editor of the Sunday school
1912 — Editor of Sunday school lessons re-elected

(After the Conference gave expression that the Sunday school lessons in their present form give general satisfaction, it was decided): (a) That by a standing vote the Conference thank Brother N. N. Hiebert for his services up to the present as editor of the Sunday school lessons, and (b) re-elect him again for this work. (c) That Brother Hiebert be free to select an assistant. GCY, 1912, p. 442.

1915 — N. N. Hiebert re-elected

(a) Brother N. N. Hiebert was re-elected as editor of the Sunday school lessons. (b) The Conference gave him a standing vote of thanks. GCY, 1915, pp. 467, 468.

1919 — J. F. Duerksen succeeds N. N. Hiebert

(Brother N. N. Hiebert asked to be released as editor of the Sunday school lessons). (a) That Brother Hiebert be given a standing vote of thanks for his ministry on the Sunday school lessons, and since he is overloaded with work, that his resignation be accepted. (b) That Brother J. F. Duerksen be engaged as editor of the lesson leaflets. (c) That the editor of the Sunday school leaflets be paid a compensation of $125 per year. GCY, 1919, p. 498.

1921 — J. F. Duerksen re-elected

(a) That we express our thanks to the editor, J. F. Duerksen, for his services. (b) That we engage him as editor (of the Sunday school lessons) for another three years. GCY, 1921, p. 51.

1924 — Sunday school committee created

(Note. The International outline and material had been followed since 1900 in the editing of the Mennonite Brethren Sunday school lessons. The advisability of changing to a different, more comprehensively Biblical, content material was discussed at the 1924 Conference, with the suggestion that the Mennonite Brethren Conference create its own Sunday school material. The Conference decided): (a) That a Sunday school committee be elected for three years: (1) That watches over the selection of the International Sunday school lessons, (2) that publishes the lesson program at least a year in advance, (3) that supplies its own lesson material where the International lessons are inadequate. (b) That a nominating committee be provided which nominates the candidates for the Sunday school committee and reports back (to the Conference) at the next session. (c) That the nominating committee recommend the size of the Sunday school committee. (d) That the following serve in the nominating committee: H. W. Lohrenz, B. J. Friesen, H. H. Flaming, Gerh. Wiens, D. C. Eitzen, H. A. Neufeld, J. F. Duerksen. GCY, 1924, pp. 47, 48.

1924 — Sunday school committee size, and membership

(a) That the Sunday school committee consist of nine members. (b) That the following serve in the Sunday school Committee: Isaac Wall and B. J. Friesen, Pacific district; H. A. Neufeld and H. E. Nickel, northern district; N. N. Hiebert and John Siemens, middle district; H. W. Lohrenz and H. H. Flaming, southern district. GCY, 1924, pp. 47, 48.

1927 — N. N. Hiebert succeeds J. F. Duerksen
(Since Brother 3. F. Duerksen requested to be released, it was decided): (a) That Brother N. N. Hiebert be elected as editor (of the Sunday school lessons). (b) That Brother 3. F. Duerksen be thanked for his editorial services by a standing vote. GCY, 1927, p. 41.

1927

Note. No report appears in the 1927 Conference yearbook by the Sunday school Committee, nor do the records show that such a committee was again elected. Thus the matter of the Sunday school lessons remained responsibility of the editor and the Publication Committee. GCY, 1927, pp. 41 and 72, 73.

1930 — English and German text

(a) That the Conference thanks Brother N. N. Hiebert for his work with the Sunday school leaflets, and engages him again as editor of the Sunday school lessons for the next three years. (b) That henceforth the text in the Sunday school leaflets be printed only in English and German, and no longer in double (two different translations) German for Canada as heretofore (subject to the wishes of the Canadian M.B. Conference meeting in the near future). GCY, 1930, pp. 45, 46.

1933 — N. N. Hiebert re-elected editor

Brother N. N. Hiebert was by acclamation re-elected for another term of three years. GCY, 1933, p. 50.

1936

Note. The 1936 constitution placed the matter of the Sunday school material under “publication” and a five-member publication committee. It further provided that the Conference elect and employ the editor of the Sunday school quarterly, whose duty it was to select the Sunday school lessons and to supply them with explanatory and devotional interpretations and to submit them for publication. This procedure had been followed in the past. But the Conference Recreated a Sunday School Committee, yet of only three members. The Sunday School Committee of 1924-1927 had nine members.

1936 — Sunday School Committee recreated

(a) That a committee be elected to promote the Sunday school matter in our Conference, and (b) which at the same time, together with the manager of the publishing house, plans to achieve a uniform procedure in the ordering of Sunday school lessons for the younger classes, and of Sunday school material as a whole. (c) That the committee recommend the best and most suitable (material) available on the market, in as far as this cannot be furnished by our own publishing house; and the churches of the Conference should then abide by the recommendation of the committee in the ordering of this (Sunday school) literature. GCY, 1936, pp. 39 and 65.

1936 — Sunday School Committee and editor elected

(a) The following were elected into the Sunday School Committee: A. H. Unruh, H. F. Toews and A. A. Kroeker. (b) Brother A. H. Unruh was elected editor of the Sunday school lessons. GCY, 1936, p. 65.

1939 — English Sunday school quarterly

(a) That for the younger classes a 64-page
Sunday school quarterly in the English language be published, containing only one introduction, one text, based on the International lessons, but having three expositions for pupils of the primary, intermediate and senior departments (respectively). (b) These expositions are to be written by three different persons in order to give them wider scope. We recognize this as an urgent need in order to achieve more uniformity in our Sunday school work. GCY, 1939, p. 20.

1939 — Permanent Sunday School Committee

(a) That the chairman of the Sunday school committees of the district conferences constitute the central Sunday school committee. (b) That this committee together with the Publication Committee regulate matters pertaining to the Sunday schools. GCY, 1939, pp. 20, 21.

1939 — Question regarding election of the three editors

That the publication committee consider the advisability of having the Conference elect the three editors of the English Sunday school quarterly, and report back to the Conference. GCY, 1939, p. 22.

1943

(It was reported at the 1943 Conference, by the chairman of the home missions committee, Brother A. A. Schroeter, that the Sunday school committee elected in 1939 had not met during the interim. The question of the inadequacy of the International lesson material for Mennonite Brethren Sunday school use was discussed at some length, and gave rise to the following resolutions):

1943 — Sunday School Committee,

graded material, 10 cent fee

(a) That a Sunday School Committee be elected as follows: One member to be elected by the Conference at large, who is to be the executive member of the committee, and that one member each be named by the five district conference delegations who together with one member of the publication committee shall comprise the General Conference Sunday School Committee - The committee is hereby instructed to make a survey of conditions and possibilities in the field of Sunday school lesson material as follows: (1) A graded lesson system for our children’s department. (2) Teachers’ lesson helps for various lessons. (3) An elementary teacher training course for use by the churches.

(b) That our churches be asked to contribute annually 10 cents per average attendant for the purpose of defraying the expenses of the committee and towards the development of the above program. This fund to be at the disposal of this committee.

(c) That since the northern districts are spending much effort and money in the development and preparation of their own lesson material for children, we exploit their experiences and knowledge in this field to the fullest. But (that) we should relieve them also from financial support of the project to the extent, that they themselves are already spending.... That the northern districts may spend half of it for their own promotion until we join completely in a united program.

(d) That the following serve in the Sunday School Committee: A. A. Schroeter, executive member; from the Northern District, A. A. Kroeker; Pacific District, J. P. Rogalsky; Central District, B. J. Braun; Southern District, J. H. Fadenrecht. GCY, 1943, pp. 56, 57.

1943
Note. During the 1939-1943 Conference interim the publication committee had engaged the following department editors for writing the English Sunday school quarterly: B. 3. Braun, adult department; P. N. Hiebert, young people; Mrs. Sam 3. Pankratz, children.

1943 — All Sunday school editors re-elected by Conference


1943 — Price of Sunday school lessons raised

That the price of the Lektionshefte and the Graded Sunday School Lessons be raised somewhat in order that the Sunday school editors and writers can be given better compensation. GCY, 1943, p. 55.

1945 — Sunday school financing (10 cents levy)

(a) That we require the churches of the districts in the States to pay up any delinquent contribution for the years 1943, 1944, 1945. (b) That we do not require the Northern and Ontario district churches to make up the said delinquent contributions for the years of 1943 and 1944, inasmuch as they have spent as much and more in the pioneering which they have done in the development of their own materials. But that for the year of 1945 and henceforth annually, they be asked to make a 10 cents per Sunday school member levy upon their churches the same as those of the U.S. are asked to do, with the original understanding that they may continue to retain one-half of it toward independent work, such as they are now doing. (c) That each representative on the committee be held responsible that these levies will be forthcoming from the churches of the district which he represents, and sent to the treasurer, Brother P. H. Berg, Hillsboro, Kansas. The method of procedure, however, is to be left entirely to the initiative of the individual as to how to secure the willing cooperation of all the Sunday schools in his district. GCY, 1945, pp. 58, 59.

1945 — Our task in furnishing Sunday school materials

(a) (Because of the inadequacy of the International lessons) That we encourage all of our churches to abandon the use of the International Sunday school lessons in the children’s classes in favor of an All-Bible Graded Series of lessons. (b) That we accept in principle the compendium of Scripture Press. (c) That all churches which have not already done so, immediately introduce the Scripture Press pupil’s quarterlies, preferably beginning with the lowest classes in order that the transition may be gradual. GCY, 1945, pp. 59, 60.

1945 — Sunday school teacher training

(a) That the Conference adopt a resolution to strive toward the goal that eventually we shall have a trained teacher for every class. (b) That we begin this campaign by making our churches deeply conscious of the need of trained teachers through a persistent emphasis upon it by the ministers in their respective churches, and through periodicals written by competent men in our church papers. (c) That we initiate, immediately, wherever possible, a teachers’ training program particularly for those who do now
or wish to teach in the younger classes, and that we make it an eventual minimum requirement of all teachers for the children’s departments that they must successfully complete one of the following courses before they would be eligible to teach: (1) Benson’s Teachers’ Training Course, Moody Press, Chicago, Ill.; or (2) Chas. A. Oliver’s - Preparation for Teachers,” The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, Pa. GCY, 1945, p. 60.

**1945 — Traveling Sunday school secretary**

That we consider the employment of a traveling Sunday school secretary, who would be the educational director of the General Conference to visit all the churches or groups of churches to meet with Christian workers in the interest of Christian education for the purpose of unification and direction of the church-school program. GCY, 1945, p. 60.

**1945 — Teachers’ helps**

(Inasmuch as many of our teachers are untrained, and, therefore, unqualified to discriminate and evaluate properly...) (a) That we ... authorize Brother A. H. Unruh to write the Teachers’ Helps for the junior and the intermediate departments... (b) That Brother B. J. Braun be (has been) assigned the task to write the Teachers’ Helps for the primary department. (Both Brethren... use the Scripture Press compendium as a basis). (c) That the material written by Brother Unruh be translated into the American language and that of Brother Braun be translated into the German language in order that all the Teachers’ Helps may become available in both languages... to be economical... and offer to us a uniform material for all the churches. (It was reported that eventually the committee hoped to be able to write our own teachers’ helps for the senior and adult departments as well). (d) That Brother J. H. Fadenrecht of Tabor College... be asked to prepare a list of books on religious education which will be recommended to all the Sunday schools for a reference library for their teachers. GCY, 1945. pp. 60, 61.

**1945 — Election of committee and Sunday school editors**

(a) Sunday School Committee, A. A. Kroeker, Northern District; A. J. Dick, Ontario; C. E. Fast, Southern; P. N. Hiebert, Pacific; Roland Toews, Central; and A. A. Schroeter, member at large and chairman of the committee. (b) H. P. Toews, editor of the “Lektionsheft”; B. J. Braun, P. N. Hiebert and Sister S. G. Pankratz to write the Sunday School Lessons, graded series. GCY, 1945, pp. 61 and 65.

1948 Sunday school resolutions. (a) That the publication committee and the Sunday school committee work out the matter of remuneration of the editors. (b) To refer the questions of use of the International or the National Sunday school lessons back to the Sunday School Committee for further study and decision. (c) That a standing vote of thanks... be accorded to the Sunday school committee for their labors. (d) That we go on record as not favoring the International Sunday school lessons. (e) That the present Sunday School Committee... be re-elected by acclamation. (A. A. Schroeter, P. M. Berg, A. A. Kroeker, A. J. Dick, P. N. Hiebert, C. E. Fast, Roland Toews). GCY, 1948, pp. 92 and 156.

**1951 — The Sunday School Committee**

That the election and organizational set-up of the committee be continued according to
the constitution, and that it meet at least once during the Conference term to pool its information, strengthen the effort of a Conference-wide unified program and strengthen the spiritual services to the Conference. GCY, 1951, p. 75.

1951 — Name of the committee, change

(a) That the name of the Sunday School Committee be changed to the ‘Church School Committee.” (b) That this name also be suggested for use in the district committees and local churches as seems expedient to them in the total program of the work. GCY, 1951, p. 75.

1951 — Sunday school materials

(a) That for the present the publications be continued. (b) That the Sunday school teachers and expositors of our Sunday school lessons ... continue the emphasis on the non-resistance principle in the interpretation of the lessons when the war idea occurs in the Old Testament lessons, and have at least two lessons per year with special emphasis on non-resistance. (c) That we continue with the National Sunday School lessons for another three years, but that the Sunday School Committee use its influence with the National committee, that more lessons be selected from the Epistles, in order to emphasize the teaching of the Bible relative to the church of Jesus Christ. (d) That the secretary (of the Conference) be instructed to include the “Outline of Study Course,” proposed by the General Conference Sunday School Committee, in the Conference report. (See pp. 76-78). GCY, 1951, pp. 75 and 76.

1951 — Sunday school teacher training material

That the Church School Committee be authorized to publish the proposed series of Elementary Study Courses as outlined: Book I, Teacher Training Study Courses; Book II, Bible Study Courses; Book III, Bible-Related Study Courses. That further materials be provided as the program develops and the needs and circumstances allow such work. GCY, 1951, p. 75.

1951 — Finances

(a) That all churches of the three districts in the States be encouraged to continue their annual remittance of 10 cents per pupil for the work of the Church School Committee as in the past. (b) That the Canadian District Churches be relieved of their annual fee in view of the difference in the work of the church school program as outlined above, until such time, when conditions become more favorable for closer coordination both in program and finances. At present all expenses of the program as far as the Canadian Conference is concerned, is being paid by the treasury of the Canadian Conference. GCY, 1951, p. 75.

1951 — Election of Sunday school committee

That the following be elected to serve in the Sunday School Committee for the next Conference term: Walter L. Penner, C. E. Fast, A. A. Kroeker, Art Flaming, Ruben Baerg and Isaac Redekop. GCY, 1951, p. 78.

1954 — Plan of the Sunday school work

(a) That the work be continued along the general lines as followed in the past interim. (b) That the need for teacher training of workers in Sunday school and its related agencies be emphasized. (c) That the graded lessons for children’s classes be continued.
(d) That the committee be urged to keep an open eye for the best materials for use in teaching the Bible in our churches and make such suggestions to churches and the Conference as will improve the work. (e) That the U.S. area for the present use: (1) Scripture Press All-Graded Bible lessons for children’s classes. (2) Use Gospel Light Press Closely-Graded lessons for midweek classes. GCY, 1954, p. 127.

1954 — NSSA affiliation

(a) That affiliation with the National Sunday School Association be continued. (b) That their lesson outlines for our adult quarterly be used. (c) That an annual contribution to that association by our areas be continued. GCY, 1954, p. 127.

1954 — Aim for united program

(a) That the two area committees work in close fellowship and strive toward a united program as a Conference board. (b) That the Church School (S.S.) committee have at least one joint meeting during the next Conference interim. GCY, 1954, p. 128.

1954 — 15 cent levy

That each local church Sunday school of the U.S. area make an annual contribution to the area committee on the basis of 15 cents per member of average attendance. GCY, 1954, p. 128.

1954 — Area Sunday school organization

(a) That the U.S. area committee seek to organize an area organization with each district represented, and work closely with the respective district committees — especially where the district committee, as such, may not be represented on the area church school committee; and the U.S. area committee take careful note of the overall organization of Sunday school work in Canada. (b) That the Canadian area committee and the organization of the area be encouraged to continue its organized program. GCY, 1954, p. 128.

1954 — Election of Sunday School Committee

(a) That in order to allow the Sunday School Committee to develop into an operative board, and in view of a request from the Canadian Conference that their two members who have served during the past term be confirmed for the next Conference term, we now elect five members from the U.S. area, for a term of only three years. (b) That the following be elected to serve for three years in the Church School Committee: Walter L. Penner, C. E. Fast, Arthur Flaming, H. M. Baerg, Marvin Jost, and the appointed Canadian Brethren… Isaac Redekop and A. A. Kroeker. GCY, 1954, p. 128.

1957 — Church Schools (Including S.S.)

That in the matter referred to this Board (of Reference and Counsel) by the Conference in the matters of the Committee of Church Schools as discussed during yesterday afternoon’s session… that, “In view of the constitutional provision… that the Committee on Church Schools submit its material in the form of a report to be included in the Conference report (yearbook).” GCY, 1957, p. 117.

The following was accepted as findings by the Church School Committee: (a) That we seek where possible to work for greater unification in the Sunday school work of our northern and southern areas. (b) That we continue to use the National Sunday school outlines and exert our influence for continued improvement in the outlines. (c)
That we seek to sponsor a General Conference Sunday school convention during the interim. (d) That each church send its Sunday school superintendent to this convention. (e) That we request the Committee of Reference and Counsel to appoint a commission to make a thorough study of Sunday school materials on the children’s level, and that this commission jointly with the Sunday School Committee report at the next General Conference. (f) That during the coming interim, we accept the policies for the Sunday School Committee as provided for in the 1957 General Conference constitution. (g) That the elected committee meet at least once during the interim. GCY, 1957, p. 48.

1957 -- Election

Arthur Flaming was elected. GCY, 1957, pp. 48 and 139. (Only the member at large is elected by the Conference. The chairman of the committees on church schools of the three U.S. area districts and three brethren from Canada are the other members of the Church Schools Committee). GCY, 1957, p. 139.

1960 -- Literature, midweek Bible classes, Conference imprint, meetings

(a) That the Conference by resolution authorize the committee to produce and publish materials for midweek Bible classes to supplement our present Sunday school materials. (b) That the Conference approve the introduction of the M.B. Graded Sunday School series under our own imprint. (c) That the committee (on church schools) meet at least once during the Conference interim, or according to prevailing needs. GCY, 1960, p. 135.

1960 -- Election

H. R. Baerg was elected member at large (to the church schools committee). GCY, 1960, p. 135. (Other members serving at the time: I. W. Redekopp, J. A. Froese, Chester Fast, B. B. Fast, H. H. Dick, A. P. Regier).

1963 -- Printing deficit of Sunday School Committee

That the debt of the General Conference Sunday School Committee be paid by the Board of Trustees treasury and the funds receivable from the sale of religious education material on hand flow into the General Conference treasury. GCY, 1963, p. 124.

1963 -- Election

Elected to serve as member at large in the Sunday School Committee was Brother Chester Fast. (Other members of the committee: Henry R. Baerg, John Block, Boy Fast, Welter Janzen, Dave Redekop, Henry H. Voth). GCY, 1963, pp. 124 and 141.

SURETY (GUARANTEE)

1887 -- Offering surety

That since several brethren have come into difficult situations because of giving surety to someone, it was strongly advised that great care be exercised in this respect, and that no one ask elders to obligate themselves. GCY, 1887, p. 55.

TABOR COLLEGE (SEE EDUCATION)

1908 -- Tabor College School Association
By a show of hands the Conference delegation voted to wish the Brethren of the Tabor College School Association the Lord's blessings in their undertaking, and assured them the confidence of the churches. GCY, 1908, p. 396.

TEACHINGS, FALSE (DOCTRINES)

1921 -- Holiness and divine healing doctrines

The Conference quotes Matt. 24:24, and Malachi 2:7, in answer to the above and warns the church in regard to the inroads of these false teachings. The lips of the priest should proclaim sound doctrine. GCY, 1921, p. 54.

TREASURY, CONFERENCE

1948 -- General M.B. Conference treasury

(a) That a treasury for conference expenses be established and that the following officers and committees be paid out of this treasury: The chairman and secretary of the Conference; the Committee of Reference and Counsel; the Home Missions Committee; the Constitution Committee; the Commission for a Conference Seminary; the annual meetings of two key persons of Tabor College, Pacific Bible Institute, and the M.B. Bible College. (b) That the amount to be budgeted for this treasury be $5,000 and that this amount be raised by one annual contribution from each church, either by transferring from a treasury or a collection. (c) That this treasury be administered by the Board of Trustees. (d) That the Conference may add such committees to the list as may be elected or appointed for regular or special tasks. GCY, 1948, p. 100.

1951 -- Conference treasury added to constitution

That a General M.B. Conference treasury be created in line with resolution adopted by the Conference in 1948, p. 100, and that this provision be incorporated in the constitution of the General Conference. GCY, 1951, pp. 93, 94, 95. 1954 -- Levy for Conference treasury That a levy of $1.00 per (church) member per Conference term (interim) be considered ...and that this levy be held as a charge against the districts, who should remit the monies due from them for the above purpose to the treasurer of the Board of Trustees within one year after the close of this Conference. GCY, 1954, p. 33.

1957 — Levy renewed

That a levy of $1.00 per church member per Conference term again be approved… for the purpose of defraying business operations implementing Conference decisions of various nature. This levy… to constitute a charge against the district conferences, who in turn shall be held responsible for transmitting money due from them to the treasurer of the Board of Trustees within one year after the close of this Conference (session). GCY, 1957, p. 20.

1957 — Board of Trustees to remind districts

That the Board of Trustees be responsible for reminding the district conferences from time to time as may become necessary of the amount of the levy due from them. GCY, 1957, p. 20.

1957 — Districts to pay dues in arrear

That those districts which have not sent in the full levy of $1.00 per (church) member
for the previous Conference term be asked to do so. GCY, 1957, p. 20.

1960 — $1.00 levy renewed

That a levy of one dollar per church member per Conference interim be made… that it be charged against the district conference… transmitted to the treasurer of the Board of Trustees within one year after the close of this Conference. GCY, 1960, p. 43.

1963 — Levy of $1.00 renewed

That again a levy of one dollar ($1.00) per church member per Conference term be made for the purpose of defraying expenses for business operations and implementing Conference decisions of varied nature. This levy is to constitute a charge against the district and provincial conferences, who in turn shall be held responsible for transmitting money due from them to the treasurer of the Board of Trustees within one year after the close of this Conference. GCY, 1963, p. 50.

WEAPONS (FIREARMS)

1879 — Weapons forbidden

That the Conference does not permit (its members) to have weapons in the house. GCY, 1879, p. 5.

1890 — Carrying of arms

That regarding the possession of firearms, going on the hunt, etc., the Conference recommends “to put the sword into the shield” and leave it there. GCY, 1890, p. 106.

1893 — Carrying of arms

That no firearms are to be permitted in our families. GCY, 1893, p. 156.

WORLDLY AMUSEMENTS (AND VICES)

1887 — Circus, theatre

That our members stay away from circuses, theatres, and such other places. GCY, 1887, p. 55.

1899 — Saloon, circus, tobacco

(The Conference) decided unanimously that church members are not allowed to visit the saloon, attend circus, or sell tobacco. GCY, 1899, p. 217.

1905 — Worldly celebrations

That the Conference refers to its resolutions of 1885 and 1889, which show that churches are not to participate in the national (worldly) celebrations, such as the Fourth of July celebrations, but to offer the youth something better, like mission or children’s festivities, or the like. GCY, 1905, pp. 340, 341.

YOUTH WORK

1888 — Tract distribution

The Conference advises that young men’s and young women’s societies, as well as Sunday schools, should engage in the distribution of good tracts. GCY, 1888, p. 72.

1888 to 1933

Note. Aside from Bible schools during the early period, the principal institutions within the churches of the M.B. Conference in which youth participated and received valuable nurture and training, were the Jugendverein (Christian Endeavor), the
Sunday school, church choirs, and children’s festivals and programs.

1933 — Regarding organization of a (Jugendbund) youth society

That upon the recommendation of the Southern District Conference, to nominate a committee that looks into the possibility of organizing a youth society, and at the close of the Conference reports its findings or possible recommendations. The following were elected by acclamation into a committee for a youth society: P. R. Lange, H. E. Wiens, W. J. Bestvater, P. C. Hiebert, H. S. Voth, H. D. Wiebe, P. H. Berg and J. H. Richert.

1933 — Report by committee on youth society

(W. J. Bestvater, secretary of the committee on youth society, presented the following recommendation to the Conference): That after deliberating extensively over the necessity of proceeding in a uniform method in the organized work (or ministry) of spiritual edification and Bible study on Sunday evenings (in our churches), we arrived at the conclusion, (a) That it is necessary to publish a periodical of some 32 pages, that offers a systematic quarter-year study plan. This quarterly pamphlet would feature the main teachings of the Bible, the doctrines of faith and history of our church, and its mission endeavors, as well as other suitable study and reading material. (b) That Brother P. H. Lange be the chief contributor (and editor) and that the Brethren H. D. Wiebe and W. J. Bestvater work together with him in the preparation of the proposed course and its preparation for print. (c) (The Conference decided) to accept the plan and to implement it. (d) That the first issue be ready for distribution for the first quarter of the year 1934. GCY, 1933, p. 62.

Note. Above committee for youth society was retained by the Conference. GCY, 1933, p. 69.

1936

Note. The committee on youth elected in 1933 gave no report except to recommend nominees for the succeeding committee membership as follows:

1936 — Youth committee

(a) The standing committee on youth nominated the following brethren to serve in the committee (during the following interim): Leslie S. Wiebe, Corn, Oklahoma; C. N. Hiebert, Hillsboro, Kansas; J. H. Richert, Reedley, California; J. H. Voth, Newton, Kansas; John J. Toews, Hepburn, Saskatchewan; (b) The Conference accepted the nominations and gave the new committee directions to continue to work in the cause of youth. GCY, 1936, pp. 65 and 73.

1939 — Youth work

No report on youth work was on hand. The chairman (of the Conference) stated that youth work lies within the confines of the district conferences, but that a discussion of this point on the basis of principles is in order. Various delegates endorsed the election of a strong, central committee to represent the cause of youth, which would do preliminary work, and regulate the publication of the youth-paper, the Christian Leader. It was also recommended, that representatives of our youth endeavors be invited to attend Conference sessions. GCY, 1939, p. 22.

1939 — Youth committee

The Conference elected five brethren as

Note. The Christian Leader,” then a monthly magazine published under the direction of the Youth Committee, “devoted to the interests of young people and to the cause of Christ in general” made its first appearance on April 1, 1937.

1943 — Report by youth committee, and recommendations

(After Brother J. W. Vogt, chairman, gave a brief oral report of the work of the youth committee, and Brother P. N. Hiebert, secretary, read the written report the Conference adopted the following resolutions): (a) That all churches of our denomination endeavor to have a Christian Fellowship or some form of a young people’s organization. The constitution (of the C.F.) provides for such organization which is available and was published in the “Christian Leader.” (b) That all youth retreats and youth Bible and inspirational conferences are to be conducted under pastoral or church supervision. (c) That all reports of Conference committee activities are also reported in the “Christian Leader” for the benefit of those who don’t read the Zionsbote. (d) That the Conference provide for an annual meeting of the Youth Committee and that the Conference empowers the Youth Committee to request one offering a year from each young people’s organization for Youth Committee expenses and needs. GCY, 1943, p. 58.

1943 — Committee membership

That Brother G. H. Jantzen of the central district serve in place of Brother H. H. Martens who was elected into the membership of the Board of Trustees. (The total membership now being — J. W. Vogt, chairman; P. N. Hiebert, secretary; Leslie Wiebe, G. H. Jantzen, Jacob H. Quiring). GCY, 1943, pp. 59 and 81.

1945 — Youth committee plans for the future

(After the committee had reported its future plans to be 1. To make the Christian Leader a bi-weekly paper, 2. To bring the Christian Fellowship organizations of each district into a united working fellowship, and 3. to engage a part-time traveling secretary to visit the various Conference churches in the interest of the Christian Leader and youth work in general, the Conference adopted the following): (a) That we endeavor to unite or coordinate the youth work in the various districts. (b) 1. That we engage a part-time secretary to visit the Conference churches in the interest of the Christian Leader and youth work in general, and to assist the committees of the various retreats and Bible camps in their youth activities. 2. that the newly elected youth committee be instructed to employ at the earliest convenience a full time editor of the Christian Leader, serving also as traveling executive secretary. ‘1’his party may or may not be a member of the youth committee. 3. That the salary and expenses of this employee be fixed by the youth committee. (c) That the Conference continue the authorization of one offering per church during the ensuing Conference term for the support of the General Conference youth work. GCY, 1945, pp. 66, 67.

1945 — Election of committee

(a) That Brother Arthur Flaming represent the central district conference. (b) That the
resignation of Brother P. N. Hiebert be accepted and that Brother G. H. Jantzen be declared elected in his place to represent the Pacific district. (c) That the youth committee, therefore, consist of: J. W. Vogt, Southern District; Leslie Wiebe, Southern District; Jacob H. Quiring, Northern District; G. H. Jantzen, Pacific District; Arthur Flaming, Central District. GCY, 1945, pp. 67 and 126.

1948 — Young people’s work

(After the General Conference youth committee had given its extensive report, the Conference decided as follows): (a) That the Conference express… deep appreciation for the work and reports of the committee. (b) That the Conference authorize the constitution committee (of the Conference) to proceed with the addition of the youth committee to the constitution as a Conference committee (and provide the necessary write-up). (c) (That the following be) elected to the youth committee: G. D. Huebert, J. W. Vogt, Walter Penner, Ernest Lautt, Henry Hooge. (The committee elected the following officers: J. W. Vogt, chairman, Henry Hooge, assistant chairman, Walter Penner, secretary-treasurer). GCY, 1948, pp. 95, 96 and 156.

1951 — Anticipated youth program

(a) That the members of the youth committee be recognized by the district committees as ex-officio members of their committee. (b) That the member at large this year be elected from the Canadian district. (c) That we pledge ourselves anew to carry out the purpose and duties as outlined in the constitutional provision. (d) That our youth treasury supply the travel expense for an exchange for at least one speaker or teacher for each district for the summer Bible camps or youth rallies. (e) That we enlarge on section 2. b, as per constitution: that is, “to prepare study material for our youth.” (f) That we earnestly solicit the help of the leaders of our churches in promoting our youth work and in the introduction of study material. (g) That the name “Youth Fellowship” be applied to our youth organizations as being more descriptive for our group, and less confusing as a name than the name being used at present. (h) To remind all of our churches of the Conference of the constitutional provision of an annual offering for the work of the youth committee. (i) That we ask… sincere prayers in behalf of our committee and for our youth. GCY, 1951, p. 104.

1951 — Vote of thanks to J. W. Vogt

That a vote of thanks be given to Brother Vogt for his untiring and sacrificial labors (as editor of the Christian Leader and chairman of the youth committee). GCY, 1951, p. 105.

1951 — Election of youth committee

The following brethren were elected: Frank C. Peters, Canadian district; Frank Wiens, central district; David J. Wiens, southern district; Arthur Wiebe, Pacific district; John Boldt, member at large. GCY, 1951, pp. 105 and 220.

1954 — Publication of youth material

(a) That we publish the prepared manuscripts on “Stewardship” by Rev. C. E. Fast and “Your Church and You” by Rev. F. C. Peters in quantities allowed by our budget. (b) That the (M.B.) Publishing House handle the sale of these books. (c) That the district youth committees promote the sale of them. (d) That the net proceeds be directed to the Tabor College Scholarship Committee for assistance in the education of
fulltime Christian workers’ children. (e) That the present committee remain intact until the production of this material is completed. GCY, 1954, p. 123.

1954 — Youth committee according to provision of new constitution

(a) The Conference elected Brother David J. Wiens as member at large, who also served as executive secretary of the youth committee. (b) The chairmen and secretaries of the youth committees of the U.S.A. districts and the chairmen of the provincial youth committees of Canada, constitute the other members of the youth committee. GCY, 1954, pp. 139 and 189.

1957 — Youth work delegated to “area conference” status

(a) That the report (below) be accepted with gratitude... wishing the youth work in both Canada and in the U.S.A. God’s blessing.

(b) Report. “The outgoing youth committee of the 1954 Conference completed the work delegated to it by the acceptance of their recommendations. The booklets by Rev. Frank Peters and Rev. C. E. Fast were published and are being sold by the M.B. Publishing House. The profits are to establish a scholarship for children of ministers or Christian workers. No organization following the last Conference was effected, and since the work is to be carried out on an area basis, we have no further report. Respectfully, David J. Wiens (executive secretary).” GCY, 1957, p. 86.

1960

No report was given on youth work at the 1960 General Conference. GCY, 1960, p.

1963 — Youth work

The new constitution adopted in 1963 provides: (a) That the General Conference looks to the district and area conferences for the implementation, promotion, and direction of the youth organization within their areas. (b) That (a Conference) youth committee shall serve as a consultative and advisory body and shall endeavor to gather and make available statistical and other pertinent information on the status, nature, and progress of youth activity and organizations, and report to the Conference findings of general interest and of common concern. (c) That the youth committee of the General Conference shall consist of the chairmen and secretaries of the youth committees of the districts within the U.S.A. area and of the chairmen of the provincial youth committees within the Canadian area. (d) That after each Conference session the committee shall meet for organization, electing from its number a chairman, an assistant chairman, a secretary, and a treasurer, who perform the usual functions incident to these offices. (e) That the committee meet prior to the sessions of the Conference to review its findings, agree on matters and data to be reported to the Conference, to take care of any other business, including its organization. 1963 Conference Constitution, pp. 42, 73, 74.
PART II
Recommendations and Resolutions of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches 1966-1975

Compiled by Herbert Giesbrecht
(Archivist of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches)

Authorized by the Board of Reference and Counsel of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches 1977

Preface to Part Two
1966—1975

Group discussion and decision have been a characteristic feature of the functioning of our congregations ever since the inception of the Mennonite Brethren Church in southern Russia over a century ago. This is neither an accidental nor incidental practice which the unpredictable vicissitudes of history have thrust upon our church as such. It is a practice, we believe, which derives its justification from a proper understanding of the nature of Christian brotherhood according to the Scriptures. Our congregations have always returned to the conviction that in the Spirit-directed consideration of both doctrinal issues and practical concerns by the brotherhood as a whole, ample opportunity is provided for the exercise of competent leadership by recognized individuals as well as for the intelligent participation in actual decision-making by all members who wish to be involved.

This mode of decision-making has not been without its attendant difficulties, of course, and our churches and conferences of churches have at times experienced much travail of spirit before a “common mind” on specific questions could be reached within the entire brotherhood. It is obvious enough that the yearbooks which otherwise faithfully record the discussions and decisions — or resolutions, to use the more contemporary term, here — of our churches and conferences cannot always tell the whole story. Nevertheless, they do offer the interested and reflective reader a surprising amount of information and insight about the currents of belief and thought which have influenced the brotherhood across the years, and about the scope of its practical activities both at home and abroad.

In order to facilitate ready reference to the main decisions reached by our churches, particularly for church pastors and leaders and teachers and students in our various conference schools, compilations of conference resolutions have been prepared from time to time. It has, however, been the hopeful anticipation of such compilers that these simple reference aids would be more than that — that they would engender and promote interest in the on-going experience of our brotherhood more generally and would invite further reflection upon the continuing validity and significance of particular decisions made by us during years which are now a part of our collective past.

The format of this particular compilation of General Conference recommendations and resolutions, for the years 1966 to 1975 (50th through 53rd Session), follows that (essentially) of A. E. Janzen’s earlier listing which spanned the years between 1878 and 1963 (First through 49th Session). The subject headings used here are therefore, the same as, or very
similar to those employed by Janzen. Our personal preference would have dictated certain changes in these headings (to bring them into closer alignment with subject headings as established by professional cataloguers) but it was felt that the concurrent use of this and Janzen’s earlier compilations would perhaps be simplified by a larger measure of uniformity among headings. The year designation in the left hand margin supplies the date of the resolution and the reference at the end of each resolution (or recommendation) indicates the precise page(s) upon which the resolution appears in the corresponding Yearbook. The abbreviation GCY is used throughout to signify General Conference Yearbook. Copies of these Yearbooks are available in each of our several archival centers. A brief note after each resolution also indicates the particular board, committee, or other group which presented the resolution (recommendation) - In some instances where prefatory material seemed pertinent to a fuller understanding of a specific resolution or recommendation, it has also been included.

Herbert Giesbrecht
Canadian Conference Archivist
Recommendations and Resolutions

ABORTION

1972 — Mennonite Brethren Church

stance on abortion

We believe that man was made in the image of God; that an attack on man’s life constitutes a violation of God’s expressed will; that life begins for man at conception and that even in the unborn state, man possesses life as God gave it, with all potential for development into knowledge of, and faith in God as Creator, Savior and Lord. Because we so believe, we affirm:
1. that all abortion, that is, the deliberate termination of a pregnancy except where the mother’s life is seriously threatened, is a violation of God’s will.
2. that we as a brotherhood support and encourage those in the helping professions (social workers, nurses, doctors, psychiatrists and ministers) to stand firm in this view and to seek to bring their colleagues and the community at large to see how abortion seriously contributes to the erosion of human values.
3. that we as individuals inform ourselves as best we can towards a realistic understanding of the whole issue of abortion with its related considerations, and that we give expression to such understanding as we have opportunity, and that when we can do so without suggestion of compromise, we align ourselves with like-minded groups to strengthen our witness in the community.
4. that we as individuals and as church(es), share the above concerns, with the elected representatives of our governments, influencing the formulation of the laws of our land with respect to abortion.
5. that we recognize our responsibility for the social, moral and spiritual conditions in our communities, and the shaping of attitudes, and that we seek to fulfill such responsibility by:
(a) lending support to whatever preventive measures we can conscientiously support.
(b) seeking to develop attitudes of social acceptance of the single parent without endorsing their actions leading to the pregnancy.
(c) helping to provide caring facilities for those who choose to let their pregnancy go full term rather than choosing abortion.

It was moved, seconded, and carried to move point 5b to precede Sa (the above report has been corrected according to this motion).

It was moved, seconded, and failed to refer the above resolution back to the Board of Reference and Counsel.

Discussion

Discussion continued from the previous session regarding the “Resolution on Abortion,” led by the presentation of the following statement from the Board:
“The Board of Reference and Counsel humbly confesses that the statement on abortion does not adequately cover all the related questions on which our brotherhood would desire guidance at this time. We would therefore recommend to our brotherhood to accept the statement with the following explanation:
1. that the Board will continue to study this question during the next triennium in order to expand and refine the statement; and
2. that the Board will include a positive statement concerning our commitment to Christian ethics as they apply to the area of human sexuality.”

It was moved, seconded and carried to accept the above statement from the Board.
It was also moved, seconded, and failed to delete the phrase in point one on the “Resolution on Abortion” which reads “…except where the mother’s life is
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1975 — Mennonite Brethren Church stance on abortion issues

1. Resolution on Abortion as adopted at the 1972 General Conference but with an added request that the Board of Reference and Counsel continue to study this question during the next triennium in order to expand and refine the statement and include a positive statement concerning our commitment to Christian ethics as it applies to the area of human sexuality:

“We believe that man was made in the image of God; that an attack on man’s life constitutes a violation of God’s expressed will; that life begins for man at conception and that even in the unborn state, man possesses life as God gave it, with all potential for development into knowledge of, and faith in God as Creator, Saviour and Lord. Because we so believe, we affirm:

(a) that all abortion, that is, the deliberate termination of a pregnancy except where the mother’s life is seriously threatened, is a violation of God’s will.
(b) that we as brotherhood support and encourage those in the helping professions (social workers, nurses, doctors, psychiatrists and ministers) to stand firm in this view, and to seek to bring their colleagues and the community at large to see how abortion seriously contributes to the erosion of human values.
(c) that we as individuals inform ourselves as best we can towards a realistic understanding of the whole issue of abortion with its related considerations, and that we give expression to such understanding as we have opportunity, and that when we can do so without suggestion of compromise we align ourselves with like-minded groups to strengthen our witness in the community.
(d) that we as individuals and as church(es), share the above concerns with the elected representatives of our governments, influencing the formulation of the laws of our land with respect to abortion.
(e) that we recognize our responsibility for the social, moral, and spiritual conditions in our communities, and the shaping of attitudes, and that we seek to fulfill such responsibility by:

(i) lending support to whatever preventive measures we can conscientiously support.
(ii) seeking to develop attitudes of social acceptance of the single parent without endorsing their actions leading to the pregnancy.
(iii) helping to provide caring facilities for those who choose to let their pregnancy go full-term rather than choosing abortion.”

2. Motion: “That the Board of Reference and Counsel be given permission to include this paper (‘The Church and Life/Death Issues’) in our Conference Proceedings book and that this be considered as the position of the Board of Reference and Counsel.” This motion carried. See pp. 34-41 of GCY for text of paper on “The Church and Life/Death Issues.” — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1975, p. 34-41.

ALCOHOL (See also Worldly Amusements and Vices)

1969 — Mennonite Brethren Church stance on use of alcoholic beverages

Much of the information and many of the figures cited below were derived from material supplied by Alcohol Education Service.

1. Increasingly churches, industry and governments are recognizing the influence and the impact of alcohol on the individual, social and economic life of a country. There is an increasing recognition of the variety, the multiplicity and the interrelatedness of the
problems which the use of beverage alcohol brings with it. Governments and church bodies have assigned large sums of money and spent much time to study this complete situation and to gather reliable information.

2. In part such studies have revealed that:
   (a) There is a tremendous increase in the incidence of drinking at all age levels, but particularly among teen-agers, and this increased incidence of indulgence brings with it an increased incidence of problem drinking. For example, juvenile arrests under the Liquor Act in the City of Winnipeg rose consistently from a total of 23 in 1957 to a total of 196 in 1966. Referrals to the Winnipeg Family Court because of breaches of the Liquor Act by juveniles increased by approximately 250% in one year — from 244 in 1965 to 611 in 1966. Similar figures could be cited for all other areas of the United States and Canada. In 1949 Dr. Jellinek of the Yale Center of Alcohol Studies compiled figures which placed the estimated number of alcoholics in the United States at nearly four million. In 1967 various estimates have placed the number between five and seven million. Alcohol authorities have suggested on the basis of specific research projects, that for every alcoholic there are from one to four problem drinkers.
   (b) There has been an alarming increase in the number of deaths arising out of traffic accidents - Various research surveys suggest that fifty percent or more of all fatal highway accidents have alcohol as a causative factor. What statistics are available indicate a sharp increase in alcohol-related private flying and boating accidents.
   (c) Increasing consumption of beverage alcohol has brought with it increasing costs to society. There are increased costs to Government for law enforcement; also increased costs of rehabilitation centers, the maintenance of social service staffs to deal with the family problems that arise out of increased problem drinking. It has been said that the sale of alcoholic beverages is a source of revenue to governments (in 1966 the U.S. Federal government reportedly collected $3,800,000,000 in beverage alcohol taxes), but what figures are available indicate that such revenues are offset by high expenses, sometimes as high as the ratio of 1 to 5. Industry, too, loses heavily through alcoholism. It is estimated that 6% of Canada’s labor force are alcoholics; the figure for the United States has been set at 8%. Alcoholics lose from 14 to 22 days more per year than do non-alcoholic workers.
   (d) Greater than financial losses, however, loom the personal losses — losses to the person involved and losses to his family. How can the suffering, the heartache, the distortions of mind and spirit which arise where alcohol is freely used be evaluated? The broken homes, the psychologically-damaged children, the broken lives, are factors which defy estimation.

3. These factors, no doubt, apply particularly to situations in which problem drinkers or alcoholics are involved. But no one arrives at that state who does not first begin to drink, and for the most part moderately. Statistics have been advanced that show that one in nine social drinkers becomes a problem drinker and one in sixteen an alcoholic. A person cannot tell in advance whether he is a potential alcoholic.

4. There are three possible positions we can take:
   (a) We can say that the Christian is not free to drink beverage alcohol nor have anything to do with the total enterprise.
   (b) We can say that moderation is the rule for the Christian. The evil is not in drinking alcoholic beverages, but in the excessive, uncontrolled use of them. We would say that the Christian is free to use beverage alcohol but he is not free to be impaired in any way.
   (c) We can say that while the Bible does warn against the use of alcohol (Proverbs 20:1, 23:3), it does not explicitly forbid the
use of beverage alcohol. The Bible does declare wine to be a benefit from the Lord (Gen. 27:28, Psalms 104:15, Isaiah 55:1, and others) and other scriptural texts would seem to point to moderate use of these beverages as acceptable conduct. We must, however, also say that the Christian has a responsibility for his example and influence. In present society, his awareness of this responsibility may lead him to exercise his freedom to participate moderately, in a negative way. The Christian abstains, not because he believes that moderate drinking is condemned outright in Scripture, but that in the face of the staggering problems of alcoholism, love to the neighbor, and in particular love to the weaker brother, demands voluntary abstinence. His freedom to indulge moderately is therefore restricted by the necessity of using his freedom responsibly to help others and thus to serve and glorify God.

**Recommendations:**
1. We accept and endorse 4c as the basis on which we covenant together to practice total abstinence. We believe that this best expresses our divine calling as disciples with responsibility to God and man.
2. We commit ourselves to support all legitimate efforts to restrict and control the production and distribution of alcoholic beverages.
3. We pledge ourselves to support an educational program which sets forth in clear, objective terms the effects of alcohol on the person and the problems associated with its use. Adopted. — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1969, p. 20-22.

**ARCHIVES, CONFERENCE** (See also Board of Christian Literature)

1969 — Establishment of an Historical Commission (Gen. Conference)

7. That a commission be appointed to work with the Board of Christian Literature in coordinating the work of historical research, establishing archives, gathering oral materials, etc., on a Conference-wide basis. (Subsidy request — $3,000.00). Adopted. — Presented by Board of Christian Literature. GCY, 1969, p. 100.

1972 — Appointment of a General Conference archivist

4. That the Conference authorize the appointment of a General Conference Archivist through the Historical Commission and encourage the appointment of area archivists who would assist congregations in gathering historical materials. Adopted — Presented by Board of Christian Literature. GCY, 1972, p. 61.

1975 — Release of Conference records for deposition in Conference archives centers

**Recommendations**
Regarding Historical Commission — “In consideration of the established depositories for conference historical records — We recommend that

(a) the General Conference direct all Boards, Committees, Commissions, and Conference officers to release all non-current documents to be deposited in the archives for preservation and accessibility.

(b) That copies of minutes, special documents and official correspondence be sent to the archival centers on a regular basis as such documents are being created.

(c) That the Conference delegates be urged to encourage their home churches to undertake the systematic preservation of historic records and deposit non-current records with the Conference-designated centers of their respective areas. Local congregations should also be encouraged to appoint a member from
their fellowship to assume special responsibility for the gathering and depositing of historical materials.

(d) That the General Conference register its endorsement for the decision of the Board of Christian Literature and the assignment of the Historical Commission to translate and print *Alt-Evangelische Mennonitische Bruderschaft in Russland* by P. M. Friesen into the English language to serve as source material for the understanding of our own historical background and our mission, and that the Conference instruct the Board of Trustees to devise a plan for the printing of the book (total cost estimate is $64,000, of which $30,000 has already been subscribed).

(e) That the following be appointed to the Historical Commission: Peter Klassen (Fresno), J. A. Toews (Clearbrook), Clarence Hiebert (Hillsboro), Helmut Hiebert (Winnipeg) - a fifth member be named by the Board of Christian Literature. The Commission is planning to ask the archivists of our several historical libraries to serve as consultants. Motion “That this recommendation be accepted.” The motion carried. — Presented by Historical Commission. GCY, 1975, p. 149-150, 160.

1975 — Preservation of local church records

2. That the Conference delegates be urged to encourage their home churches to undertake the systematic preservation of historic records and deposit non-current records with the Conference-designated centers of their respective areas. Local congregations should also be encouraged to appoint a member from their fellowship to assume special responsibility for the gathering and depositing of historical materials. Adopted. — Presented by Historical Commission. GCY, 1975, p. 150.

BAPTISM

1972 — Acceptance of non-immersed believers into membership

Board of Reference and Counsel Recommendations:

1. The Board of Reference and Counsel, encouraged by regional conferences, churches and concerned individuals, studied once again the question of acceptance into membership of non-immersed believers and their transfer to churches within the brotherhood. As a Board we recommend to our brotherhood that:

(a) We re-affirm that the M.B. Church practice only one form of baptism and that this be immersion (as stated in our Confession of Faith).

(b) Also, that we encourage those who apply for membership in our churches and who were baptized upon confession of faith by some other mode, to consider baptism by immersion.

(c) However, in view of the generally favorable acceptance of the practice initiated at the 1963 convention, we as a Board recommend to our brotherhood, that non-immersed members who have been accepted into the fellowship of local churches be allowed to transfer to other M.B. Churches, by letter.

It was moved, seconded, and failed to table the motion to accept the recommendation. It was further moved, seconded, and carried to amend point 1c by deleting the word “concurring,” replacing it by “other” (the above statement is corrected according to this motion). It was moved, seconded and carried to accept the recommendation as amended.


BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
(Formerly Church Schools Committee)
1975 — Creation and structure of the Board of Christian Education (formerly Church Schools Committee)

**Recommendation 1:** The Church Schools Committee recommends that board status be given to the committee in view of the following rationale:
(1) There is need for continuity on the committee. (2) If the mandate given to the committee is to be taken seriously, it must include more than information and consultation. It must include implementation and action. (3) If the mandate given to the committee is to be carried to its conclusion, there must be a reasonable predictability of personnel and resources. Motion “That this recommendation be adopted.” The motion carried.

**Recommendation 2:** The Church Schools Committee recommends that the structure of the Board be as follows: Elected at General Conference convention for 6-year terms: one Canadian representative; one United States representative; one at-large representative; the executive officers of the Board would be chosen from these three. (For the first election, the Canadian representative would be elected for a three-year term to provide for staggered terms.)

Appointed by Area Boards: executive secretary for Christian Education in U.S.A.; executive secretary for Christian Education in Canada; two representatives from Canadian Board of Christian Education; two representatives from U.S. Board of Evangelism and Christian Education. Motion “That this recommendation be adopted.” This motion carried.

**Recommendation 3:** The Church Schools Committee recommends a budget of $5,000. Motion “That this recommendation be approved.” The motion carried. — Presented by Board of Christian Education. GCY, 1975, p. 8-59.

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

(See also Historical Commission)

1966 — Establishment of a standing Board of Christian Literature

Recommendation regarding the Board of Christian Literature:
1. We recommend to the Conference that a permanent Board of Christian Literature be established.
2. We recommend the following changes to the 1963 edition of the *General Conference Constitution*.
   (a) Purpose. Add to the paragraph on page 37 the additional comment: “To encourage the training of Christian writers.”
   (b) Implementation. Add to the existing paragraph on page 38: “To coordinate the printing (publication) activities of the various boards of the conference; to disseminate the information of interesting material of value for the spiritual growth of both young and old.”
   (c) Election and Organization. We submit that the paragraphs on page 69 under (a) and (b) be revised as follows: Election and Term. The Board of Christian Literature consists of seven members elected as follows: Two members, one from Canada and one from the United States, shall be elected by the General Conference at the regular convention sessions for a period of six years and one member-at-large to be elected for three years. These serve as the executive board. One representative from each of the Canadian and United States Conference Publication Boards is to be appointed by his Board for a period of three years. In addition, one editor from each publishing house shall be ex-officio members of the board.
   (d) Function. The statement on page 70 concerning the purpose and function we should desire to be revised as follows: (a) The Board shall, in line with its assignment
in part II, promote and coordinate the production and dissemination of Christian literature at home and abroad. (b) An editorial change under (b) Assignments shall read “The board shall also function ..“ (b) Add a section as follows: Coordination. The board shall serve as a clearinghouse of information to other boards concerning the publication of available materials. (c) Same as “Findings”, page 73 (2c).

3. We recommend that the devotional booklet, Worship Together, be produced for distribution to our churches on a permanent basis and that the expenses for the production of the work be borne by the General Conference treasury. Points 1 and 2 (with all sub-points) were adopted. Discussion followed on point 3. It was moved, seconded, and carried that decision on this point be reserved until the report of the Board of Christian Literature had been heard, together with an insight into the results of the questionnaire which was submitted to the delegation concerning the devotional booklet Worship Together. — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1966, p. 28-29.

1966 — Sponsorship of Christian writers’ institutes


1966 — Production of a membership manual


1966 — Production of a ministers’ manual

3. (a) That the Conference approve the production of a ministers’ manual. (b) That the Conference ratify the appointments of the following for the editorial committee: Waldo Hiebert, H. J. Brandt, Wilmer Kornelson, (chairman), and Orlando Wiebe. Adopted. — Presented by Board of Christian Literature. GCY, 1966, p. 113.

1966 — Acceptance of budget

4. That the Conference approve the budget for 1966-1969. In explanation of this budget the Board points out that a subsidy is necessary to launch the projects in items “B” and “C” below, but that we anticipate a certain portion of these monies to return through sales. These monies could then be used to launch further projects.

A. Writers’ Institutes $3,000
B. Publications
   1. Membership Manual $2,000
   2. Ministers’ Manual 1,500
   3. Introducing M.B. Church 2,000
   4. M.B. Trailblazers Series 6,000
   5. Ethics 1,500
   6. Translations 3,000
   7. Church in Mission 1,000
   Total 17,000
C. Further Possible Publications 5,000
D. Board Expenses (Administration, Travel, Professional Ser.) 5,000
Total 30,000

1966 — Budgeting for Worship Together

(d) The tabled motion concerning the devotional booklet *Worship Together* was brought to the floor. Considerable discussion followed. Many favorable comments were made concerning the booklet. It was moved, seconded and carried that in view of concurrence on the part of the Board of Trustees and the Board of Christian Literature, the cost for *Worship Together* be added to the Board of Christian Literature budget for the next triennium. — Presented by Board of Christian Literature. GCY, 1966, p. 113.

1969 — Budgeting for Worship Together

1. That the *Worship Together* devotional guide be placed on a church subscription basis beginning January 1, 1970, at the annual rate of $1.00 (about 15 cents per copy); costs in excess of this revenue to be borne through conference subsidy. (Subsidy request for the period beginning Jan., 1970 — $16,000.00). Adopted — Presented by Board of Christian Literature. GCY, 1969, p. 100.

1969 — Writing institutes

2. To conduct five writing institutes during the next triennium in our major educational centers. (Subsidy request — $3,000.00). Adopted. — Presented by Board of Christian Literature. GCY, 1969, p. 100.

1969 — Documents of the Mennonite Brethren Church (book)


1969 — History of M.B. Missions (book)


1969 — History of the Mennonite Brethren Church (book)

5. That the Conference authorize the writing of a definitive *History of the Mennonite Brethren Church*, to begin as soon as satisfactory arrangements can be made. (Subsidy request — $6,000.00). Adopted. — Presented by Board of Christian Literature. GCY, 1969, p. 100.

1969 — With (periodical)

6. That the Mennonite Brethren Conference become co-publishers of the inter-Mennonite youth magazine *WITH* for a two-year period, at which time the project is to be carefully reviewed. (Subsidy request - $5,500.00). Recommendation 6, after being moved and seconded, was voted on by secret ballot. The motion was defeated. (No.312, yes-42.) — Presented by Board of Christian Literature. GCY, 1969, p. 100-101.

1969 — Establishment of an Historical Commission (General Conference)

7. That a commission be appointed to work with the BCL in coordinating the work of historical research, establishing archives, gathering oral materials, etc., on a conference-wide basis. (Subsidy request — $3,000.00). Adopted. — Presented by Board of Christian Literature. GCY, 1969, p. 100.
1969 — Subsidy for *Mennonitische Rundschau*

8. That the General Conference accept responsibility of subsidizing the *Mennonitische Rundschau* in the amount of $5,000.00 for the last year of the triennium (1971-72). Adopted. — Presented by Board of Christian Literature. GCY, 1969, p. 100.

1972 — Conference support of *Rejoice* (formerly *Worship Together*), (periodical)


1972 — Conference support of *Bridge* (periodical)


1972 — Conference support of writing institutes

3. That the Conference continue the support of writing institutes in our constituency. Adopted. — Presented by Board of Christian Literature. GCY, 1972, p. 61.

1972 — Appointment of a General Conference archivist

4. That the Conference authorize the appointment of a General Conference archivist through the Historical Commission and encourage the appointment of area archivists who would assist congregations in gathering historical materials. Adopted. — Presented by Board of Christian Literature. GCY, 1972, p. 61.

1972 — Merging of *Mennonite Brethren Herald* and *Christian Leader* (periodicals)

5. That the Conference discuss the issue of merging the *M. B. Herald* and *Christian Leader* and give the Board of Christian Literature direction in this question. It was moved, seconded and carried that the recommendation be referred to the two area Boards and that they study the issue and return to the next Convention with a plan for action —Presented by Board of Christian Literature. GCY, 1972, p. 61-62.

1972 — Subsidy for *Mennonitische Rundschau*

6. In the light of attempts to implement publication indigenization in South America, we recommend that the Conference subsidize the Canadian Board of Publications program of sending the *Mennonitische Rundschau* to South America during the next triennium in the amount of $8,000 on the following basis: 1st year - $4,000; 2nd year - $3,000; 3rd year - $1,000; with the understanding that this would phase out BCL support of the *Mennonitische Rundschau* distributed in South America. Adopted. — Presented by Board of Christian Literature. UCY, 1972, p. 61.

1972 — Acceptance of Board of Christian Literature budget.

7. That the Conference adopt the Board of Christian Literature triennium budget, which follows:
### I - Books and Pamphlets

**Budget Request**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Membership Manual</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trailblazers</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MB. Documents</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.B. History</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MB. Mission History</td>
<td>9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace Publications</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamphlets and Miscellaneous</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### II. Periodicals

**Rejoice** (self-supporting)

- Bridge: 16,500
- *Mennonitische Rundschau*: 8,000

### III. Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newsletter and Promotion</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Commission</td>
<td>5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing Institutes</td>
<td>3,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Services</td>
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</table>

### IV. Administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Budget Request** $69,900

It was moved, seconded and carried to accept recommendations one through four.

It was moved, seconded, and carried to accept the sixth recommendation regarding the support of the *Mennonitische Rundschau*. It was moved, seconded and carried to accept the BCL budget. —Presented by Board of Christian Literature. GCY, 1972, p. 61-62.

### 1975 — Editorial cooperation between the MB. Herald and the Christian Leader

“At the Reedley Convention in 1972 the question was raised whether it is expedient to continue indefinitely with two periodicals, MB. Herald (Canada) and Christian Leader (USA), or whether discussions pointing toward merger or some alternate models for periodical publication might be considered. The Conference then asked the area Conferences to consider the matter and present a plan for action in 1975.

Both area boards have prepared a statement; the BCL appointed a study task force as described in our Conference report. The three boards have met and present the following composite statement.

1. In view of our international Brotherhood, print media communication(s) on an inter-conference level should be investigated.
2. The three Boards declare themselves open to an active study of periodical ministries in our General Conference and ask the brotherhood to be open to changes and improved structures in periodicals.
3. For the next triennium active cooperation between the two periodicals (MB. Herald and Christian Leader) is encouraged. Such active cooperation would include:
   a) reporting coverage for one another on major events or developments within the area conferences which should be communicated to both constituencies.
   b) providing copies of significant feature articles to one another.
   c) periodically joining together in preparation of special inserts (e.g. General Conference, Study Conferences, Youth insert, etc.).
   d) periodically cooperating to give coverage to various areas of our General Conference work and then, over a period of time, acquainting readers within our total North American constituency with the churches and the work of that total constituency.
   e) the editorial staffs of the two periodicals would meet at least once a year to discuss aims and philosophy and to plan concretely for specific cooperative ventures -
4. To facilitate such cooperation, finances be made available by each of the three boards in the amount of $700.00 per year to be pooled to facilitate the editorial staffs.
5. Outright merger does not seem wise at this time, but if through the experience of such cooperative work during the coming triennium it becomes evident that closer cooperation and merger would better serve
our brotherhood, appropriate plans for such action can then be developed. We therefore recommend that the conference endorse the proposed course of action toward greater cooperation between the M.B. Herald and Christian Leader as outlined above. Motion that this recommendation be accepted. This motion carried. — Presented by Board of Christian Literature. GCY, 1975, p. 157-158.

1975 — Church support for Rejoice

During the six weeks a survey was undertaken to ascertain constituency response to Rejoice through a questionnaire in the M.B. Herald and the Christian Leader. Among the positive comments registered were: “Would not want to be without it”, “The children appreciate something on their level”, “Often the meditation deals with a problem in our family, and the children can identify with it.” On the other hand, there were numerous comments that it was not always sufficiently uplifting. Suggestions for improvement included: that the vocabulary was sometimes not on the level of the average person, that there was too much generalization and not enough life-relatedness, and that too many contemporary slants were used. As a Board we acknowledge these and other shortcomings. The computer-prepared analysis of replies indicated that Rejoice was used most in the Southern District of the U.S. Conference and that there seems to be a positive correlation between promotion of Rejoice and its use by church members.

In view of the appointment of new editorial staff to improve Rejoice, and the indication that it is meeting a significant need.... We recommend that we encourage our churches to give active support to Rejoice, particularly with reference to providing it for their families. Motion: “That this recommendation be accepted”. This motion carried. — Presented by Board of Christian Literature. GCY, 1975, p. 159.

1975 — Discontinuance of Bridge

At the 1969 Conference, the Convention authorized the BCL to produce a youth magazine (Bridge); however, due to a budget inadequate to produce a realistic magazine, and to distribution problems. We therefore recommend that Bridge be discontinued and that our youth be served through a series of five annual inserts in our area publications; these inserts are to be prepared by the educational institutions and coordinated by a Board of Christian Literature appointed editor. Motion “That this recommendation be accepted.” This motion carried. — Presented by Board of Christian Literature. GCY, 1975, p. 159.

1975 — Appointment of a part-time literature consultant

We therefore recommend the appointment of a literature consultant on a part-time basis, such appointment to move toward a half-time assignment within this triennium, if possible. Adopted. — Presented by Board of Christian Literature. GCY, 1975, p. 161.

1975 — Financing of BCL book projects

In the past subsidies for the preparation and printing of manuscripts have been presented in conjunction with each project. A mutually agreeable policy for financing the printing of books and pamphlets has now been prepared by the Board of Trustees and Board of Christian Literature. We therefore recommend:

a) that the Board of Trustees become the
“bankers” for the printing of BCL projects (as in the case of Worship Hymnal). Should subsidies for printing become necessary, they will be requested after the printing and promotion of books and pamphlets.

b) that a budget of $70,000 be adopted for the preparation (writing, editing, administering) of manuscripts for publication.

Entire recommendation was adopted. — Presented by Board of Christian Literature.


BOARD OF MASS MEDIA

1972 — Establishment of the Board

In recent years the Mass Media Commission of the U.S. Area Board of Evangelism and Christian Education and the Radio-TV Committee of the Canadian Area Board of Evangelism have been sharing their concerns and plans via an exchange of meeting minutes and occasional meetings of representatives. The Commission and Committee concerned are eager to cooperate in ministries and projects involving radio, television and related media. Presently, the U.S. Mass Media Commission as well as the Canadian Radio-TV Committee are each represented in some of the same associations and cooperative ventures. These are the Mennonite Council on Mass Communications (MCMC), National Religious Broadcaster (N RB), Choice production, and Inter-Mennonite Television Spot productions.

In consideration of the above, be it resolved:

1. That the General Conference officially establish a Board of Mass Media.
2. That this Board be comprised of 5 members: 2 members, one from Canada, one from U.S., to be elected by the General Conference at the regular convention session for a period of 6 years, and one member-at-large to be elected for 3 years. These serve as the Executive Board. One representative from each of the Canadian and the U.S. Evangelism Boards to be appointed by the Board for a period of 3 years.
3. That this Board be responsible to the General Conference in the area of radio, television, film, cassette, and related electronic media to:
   a) encourage cooperation of existing Canadian and U.S. Mennonite Brethren interests.
   b) initiate the exploration of new areas of cooperation.
   c) develop programs, ministries and services according to the needs of the churches and the wishes of the Conference.
   d) represent Mennonite Brethren interests in consultations and projects on an inter-Mennonite and/or inter-denominational basis (e.g. MCMC, NRB, Choice, Inter-Mennonite TV Spots).

Further explanations:
1. The area Boards would continue in their responsibilities for ministries in their areas, e.g. “Words of the Gospel”, etc.
2. The funds from the area Boards designated for cooperative projects (e.g. Choice, TV Spots) would be combined to become the “Mennonite Brethren” contribution. At present this amounts to approximately $10,000.00 ($5,000 from Canada, $5,000 from U.S.) per year.

It was moved, seconded and carried to adopt the resolution. —Presented by U.S. Area Board of Evangelism/Christian Education and Canadian Area Board of Evangelism.

GCY, 1972, p. 63.

BOARD OF REFERENCE AND COUNSEL

(See specific subject headings for particular issues dealt with by this Board)

1975 — Status of Board members who change place of residence.
Motion: “That when a member moves from one area to another he relinquishes his position and that the area Conference appoints replacements for vacancies in their area.” The motion carried. —Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1975, p. 50.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

1966 — General Conference levy

We recommend that we raise the General Conference levy to $3.00 per member for the next three-year term: (a) As in previous years, $1.00 per member for conference expenses. (b) Devotional (Worship Together) $1.00 per member. (c) Christian Literature budget $1.00 per member. Adopted. — Presented by Board of Trustees. GCY, 1966, p. 136.

1966 — Interest in respect to Mission Endowment Fund

We recommend that we delete from our constitution on page 34, item 2 B, under the Mission Endowment Fund the sentence “with interest of at least five percent per annum.” Adopted. — Presented by Board of Trustees. GCY, 1966, p. 136.

1966 — Change in interest rates

We recommend that the Board of Trustees be authorized to change the interest rates, that the average maximum spread be 2% between interest paid on Trust Funds and interest earned on loans.

The Board of Trustees does hereby inform the General Conference that a change of organization and records will be necessary due to changes in the Canadian Income Tax Act according to a notice received from Ottawa. Necessary steps will be followed through in order to adhere to the new requirements.

Recommendation 1. Moved, seconded to accept. Carried.


Because recommendation 2 involves a constitutional change, it was moved and seconded that the provision of recommendation 2 be accepted as a working basis for the Conference interim and that the properly-worded suggested amendment be submitted to the churches for ratification according to the provisions of the Constitution. Carried.


1969 — Change in fiscal year.

The Board of Trustees and Board of Missions and Services jointly recommended that the fiscal year be changed from September 30 to May 31, for the following reasons: 1. So that annual financial statements of the General Conferences Boards and Committees can be presented to all Area Conferences within the calendar year; 2. To enable the unification of the Fiscal and Calendar year operation of the Board of Missions and Services. It was moved, seconded and passed to accept the recommendation. — Presented by Board of Trustees. GCY, 1969, p. 31.

1972 — Establishment of a Stewardship Department.

Recommendation 1:

That we establish a Stewardship Department with the following objectives:

The General Conference through its Board of Trustees develop a planned giving program. This program to concern itself with deferred and other giving. All ministries of our Conferences to be represented in this deferred giving program. It should also be
understood that this does not take the place of current drives and appeals for missions, education, and related conference work. This program will be geared mainly to annuities, life income agreements, special gifts, trusts, and wills. We hope that through this program we will encourage people to plan their estates, taking advantage of the tax law provisions. Charitable designations, either through annuities, life income agreements, trusts or wills could go for education, local church, missions, and home missions, as desired by the donor.

Purpose:
1. To avoid duplication of solicitation, develop a service to all Mennonite Brethren-supported missions, institutions or local churches in the field of personal estate planning.
2. To offer stewardship education on usage of accumulated possessions to our brotherhood.
3. To offer education in estate planning.
   a. Develop relationship with our brotherhood and private impartial counsel.
   b. To act as the middle-man between client and professional advisor.
   c. To do no solicitation of cash operating funds, but to channel accumulated possessions.
4. To offer investment management service for all affiliated organizations of our Conference.

Implementation:
The Board of Trustees, in cooperation with BOMAS, seek out a brother or brethren capable of offering such services to our brotherhood.
That the appointed brother or brethren be introduced to our brotherhood through our church periodicals.
That through the cooperation of our pastor brethren these representatives find entrance into the churches to introduce their services. That through suitable individual mailings, group meetings and personal contacts, these services be introduced to our brotherhood.


1972 — Revised organization of Board of Trustees (member at large).

Recommendation 2:
1. That the term of the member-at-large be extended from three to six years. Member-at-large will be elected for a term of six years instead of three years.
2. That the two elected board members with the highest votes be elected for a six-year term and the elected member with the third highest votes be elected for a three-year term for this election only.

Rationale: To be consistent with area election of Board members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
<th>Canada</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>2 U.S.</td>
<td>1 Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>2 U.S.</td>
<td>3 Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>2 U.S.</td>
<td>1 Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>2 U.S.</td>
<td>3 Canada</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All members would serve a term of 12 years if re-elected after first term of service.

Information to the Brotherhood Regarding Investment of Funds.
The Board of Trustees wishes to inform the Conference that it is their intention to extend the investment policies beyond the church and church-related institutions with the understanding that the church and related institutions will continue to receive first priority.
This action has been taken in anticipation of the previous recommendation.

Vernon Wiebe, executive secretary to Board of Missions and Services, related to the Convention that BOMAS has been served well by the Board of Trustees. — Presented by Board of Trustees. GCY, 1972, p. 48.

1972 — General Conference levy

It was moved, seconded, and carried to
accept a levy increase from $1.20 to $1.50 per member and to accept the proposed budget. —Presented by Board of Trustees. GCY, 1972, p. 63.

1972 — Budget preparation procedure

A resolution was read by the executive secretary, regarding the position of the Pacific District Conference toward the philosophy of budget preparation. The resolution follows:

In view of the report of the Board of Trustees and the percentage of contributions by areas and districts, we are aware of the fact that the Pacific District Conference has not met the specific norms requested by the General Conference. The Pacific District has for a good number of years sought to develop an approach to our district budget that would reflect fiscal responsibilities. Rather than to impose our District Conference budget on our local churches, we have presented our budgetary needs and solicited local church commitments toward the budget. Our budget committee then adjusted the budget so as not to exceed the commitments. This procedure during the last few years has resulted in a very positive response from our local churches. We are pleased to note also that the same principle is expressed by the Board of Missions and Services in their report to the Conference as found in their second recommendation. It reads “The indebtedness of the last years made it clear that the mission should not spend according to the budget but according to the monies at hand”. We are therefore ready to submit to the General Conference a resolution authorized by motion of the Pacific District Conference at its annual convention, November 9, 1972, to recommend that like budgetary procedures be followed by the General Conference, that is, to present the proposed General Conference budget to the district and provincial conferences before the final budget session, to solicit commitments by the district and provincial conferences toward the budget, and that the final budget be based on these commitments. It was moved, seconded and carried to refer the above resolution to the Board of Trustees for study and response at the next Convention. —Presented by Board of Trustees. GCY, 1972, p. 64.

1975 — Board loan policy

Be it resolved that:
(a) The Board of Trustees loan policy be extended to include loans to churches for the purpose of assisting their pastors in the acquisition of a home.
(b) That the Board of Trustees loan policy be further extended to include homeownership loans to M.B. pastors or retired pastors who have served our brotherhood for 10 years or longer in North America or on an M.B. Mission project.

Amendment to the Motion:
It was moved and accepted to include after “10 years or longer” the words “in North America or on an MB. Mission project”. This motion carried.

Presented by Board of Trustees. GCY, 1975, p.128-129.

1975 — Conference levy and financing

The Pacific Conference resolution regarding levies as described on page 64 of the 1972 General Conference Yearbook. After careful study and consultation with the Pacific District officers, the Board of Trustees would recommend that the present mode of conference financing be continued. Motion “To accept this recommendation”. This motion carried. — Presented by Board of
The proposed constitutional changes are listed below:

**Amendments relating to Board of Trustees operations within Canada**

All of the following amendments refer to the 1963 *Constitution* published by the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.

**Amendment 1.**
Refer to page 30 of *Constitution*, section 3. (a). To this paragraph should be added a further sentence reading as follows:
“The Board of Trustees may delegate this responsibility within Canada to the Board of Stewardship of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches as hereinafter provided.”

**Amendment 2.**
Refer to pages 33 to 36 of *Constitution* concerning “The Conference Directorate”. At the end of this section should be added a new section number 3 reading as follows:
3. “The Directorate’s Function within Canada”

“All and all of the functions of the Conference Directorate, including its Stewardship responsibilities, may be delegated, in part or in whole, from time to time to the Board of Stewardship of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, provided that the Canadian Conference Board of Stewardship shall consist of the Canadian members of this Conference Directorate.”

**Amendment 3.**
Refer to page 55 of *Constitution*, section 1. (a). To this paragraph should be added a sentence to read as follows:
“To enable the Board to maintain a legal status within Canada, the Board representatives from Canada shall be deemed to be the Board within Canada for such purpose and shall function as a Board of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches to be known as The Board of Stewardship.”

**Amendment 4.**
Refer to page 55 of *Constitution*, section 1. (b). To this paragraph should be added a further sentence to read as follows:
“There shall also be designated a Canadian chairman, assistant chairman, secretary, and treasurer to carry out such duties within Canada as are set forth in section 3 and which may from time to time be delegated by the Board to them.”

**Amendment 5.**
Refer to page 55 of *Constitution*, section 2, concerning the duties of the Board of Trustees. This section presently contains sub-sections lettered from (a) through (d). It is proposed that two further sub-sections be added to read as follows:
(e) “Without restricting the above sub-sections, the Board of Trustees shall be responsible for the stewardship program of the Conference and shall be empowered to receive gifts, bequests, and donations of all kinds, whether of realty or personality, and whether absolute or partial, or present or deferred, and the Board of Trustees may enter into such agreements from time to time as it may deem fit to provide for annuities from which the Conference derives benefits or to provide for deferred gifts to the Conference or the like.

(f) Delegation Within Canada
“The Board of Trustees may delegate any of its authority and duties under this section to the Board within Canada as hereinbefore provided and which shall be known as the Board of Stewardship of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.”
Proposed amendments to Constitution of General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches:
The amendments suggested below are all based upon, and make reference to the 1963 edition of the Constitutional Booklet published by the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.

Amendment 1.
Refer to page 36, part C (a) — “The Commission”
Add to this paragraph a further sentence reading as follows:
“The Conference may delegate responsibility for administration of this commission or any part thereof to the Area Conferences, or any of them, by resolution of the Board of Missions and Services subject to the agreement of the Area Conference in question.”

Amendment 2.
Refer to page 59 of Constitution under part C, section 1, sub-section A (b).
To this paragraph should be added an additional sentence to read as follows:
“To permit the Board to maintain a separate legal status within Canada, the Board representatives from Canada shall be deemed to be the Board within Canada for such purpose.”

Amendment 3.
Refer to page 60 of Constitution and at sub-item (c) at the top of that page which is headed “Organization” add the following:
“To maintain a separate legal status in Canada there shall be designated~ from the Canadian representatives on the Board, a Canadian chairman, a Canadian assistant chairman and a Canadian recording secretary. They shall have those duties and responsibilities set forth in paragraph (c) of this section but only insofar as necessary to maintain a separate legal status within Canada.”

Amendment 4.
Refer to page 61 of Constitution, part B of section 1, under which are listed (commencing on page 60) items (a) through (3).
To this part should be added a further subparagraph lettered (f) and reading as follows:
(f) “The Canadian Entity”
“The duties of the Board for purposes of the Canadian identity shall be as set forth in this paragraph but these may be delegated to these Canadian representatives to such extent and in such manner as the Board may from time to time by resolution direct.”

Amendment 5.
Refer to page 61 of Constitution, under part C of section 1 which lists the duties of the separate officers under points from (a) to (c).
To this should be added a further subparagraph lettered (d), and reading as follows:
(d) “Within Canada the duties of the officers appointed or elected for Canada shall be the same as herein set forth for officers of the whole Board. Recorded minutes of the Board shall be deemed to be official minutes of the Canadian Board and may be signed by the Canadian officers for that purpose.

Amendment 6.
Refer to page 64 of Constitution, section 3 dealing with the treasuries for missions.
To this section should be added a further paragraph lettered (d) and reading as follows:
“Monies designated for the treasuries described in this paragraph which are raised in Canada shall in first instance be directed to the treasury of the Canadian Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America, which is authorized on behalf of this Board to issue receipts in its name on behalf of the Board. All monies so received shall be allocated as in this paragraph provided and such allocations shall be at the direction of the Board or those designated by the Board to act on its behalf.” The above amendments to the Constitution were all
CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

1972 — Mennonite Brethren stance towards charismatic movement

Resolution on the charismatic question: Since God’s Spirit is like the wind which “blows where it wills” (John 3), the Mennonite Brethren brotherhood must be sensitive to what is happening in the so-called charismatic movements of our day. It should beware of self-righteousness and complacency, and of a censorious attitude towards those who have become involved in these movements. We must take seriously Paul’s warning not to quench the Spirit (1 Thess. 5), and constantly strive to be charitable towards those whose experience of God is attended by somewhat unusual phenomena.

On the other hand, the brotherhood must exercise discernment (also a gift of the Spirit), and not value certain gifts out of proportion to others, while humbly acknowledging God’s sovereignty in the distribution of gifts. Also, it must recognize that love (and the other fruits of the Spirit) are of much greater significance than spiritual gifts. This would imply that “charismatics” should guard against causing divisions in the brotherhood and that those not equipped with ecstatic gifts learn to accept the “charismatics” just as Christ has accepted (them) you (Rom. 15). All must remember that God’s gifts are given for service and not to indicate degrees of spirituality. It is quite contrary to the teaching of Scripture to demand that all believers give evidence of the same gifts. As a brotherhood:

1. We confess that our lives often do not give evidence of the fullness of the Spirit, and we want to take more seriously Paul’s exhortation to “keep on being filled” (Eph. 5). We recognize, however, that since humility is a mark of the Spirit’s fullness, we must guard against the sin of pride by claiming to possess a greater measure of the Spirit’s power and fullness than our brothers.

2. We accept the fact that the spiritual pilgrimage of the different members of our brotherhood may vary considerably in its outward expression (there may be post-conversion crises, or constant, quiet growth — hopefully not regression), and it would be wrong to make the circumstances attending our spiritual experiences normative for others.

3. We recognize that those who witness to a crisis-experience by which they gained new liberty and power to witness (perhaps they even have the gift of tongues by which to commune with God in a new way), should refrain from describing this experience as a “baptism of the Spirit”. All the passages of Scripture that speak of the baptism of the Spirit speak either of the Pentecost event or (as in the case of I Cor. 12:12, 13) of initiation into the body of Christ. Nor should one read one’s own spiritual experience back into those passages of the book of Acts which describe in diverse ways the receipt of the Holy Spirit (e.g., the Samaritans, chap. 8), Paul (chap. 9); house of Cornelius, (chap. 10); Ephesian Disciples, (chap. 19). None of these unique events lays down an order of Christian experience.

4. We call to mind that the Spirit (as Jesus promised) always glorifies Christ. The Spirit must therefore not be exalted above Christ, for it is by His Holy Spirit that the risen and exalted Christ is present in the church today. Resolution adopted. — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1972, p. 9-10.
CHURCH AND THE CRIMINAL OFFENDER

1975 — Resolution on church’s ministry to the criminal offender

A paper on “The Church and the Offender” (see p. 46-48 of 1975 General Conference Yearbook) was presented by the Board of Reference and Counsel. The following resolution was proposed in connection with the paper.

In the light of these observations be it resolved that:

1. We, as a Christian community, work hard at the prevention of crime both by teaching and training members of our community that man is a responsible creature of God and that an over-indulgent attitude to transgression in our midst, in our homes, schools or church community leads to irresponsible and ultimately criminal behavior. In a “machine-minded” age a liberating biblical view of man respecting human freedom and dignity needs to be strongly upheld!

2. We as local congregations make greater efforts in bringing Christ’s healing to the alienated and friendless in our society, in particular to the offender. M-2 (man-to-man) programs or variations thereof provide guidelines for us. Appointment of Christian chaplains, worthwhile in itself, ought to be regarded as a means of bringing about greater Christian personal involvement in visitations.

3. We, as a Christian community, develop interest in prison reform, seeking better alternatives for punishing or reforming offenders. Probation homes and efforts to secure work and accommodation for pre-delinquents are some concrete ways in which help may be given.

The Christian church which is merely in quest of numerical success, a characteristic of our Western culture, tends to multiply churches in suburbia. Our Lord, the Great Shepherd, who went in search of one lost sheep, would call us to penetrate with the gospel also those so-called “non-productive” areas, whether these be the cross-cultural city centers or the offenders of our society.

A discussion took place about the paper “The church and the offender” and its recommendation. The suggestion was made that possibly a service to the “offended” should also be considered. Minor changes were suggested and accepted.

Motion: “That the resolution with the accepted changes be adopted”. This motion carried. — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1975, p. 48-49.

CHURCH AND ITS MEMBERSHIP
(See also Doctrine, Principles, Interrelationships of M.B. Churches)

1969 — Individual member and guidelines of the church

Resolution 2:

1. We confess and affirm that while the Word of God speaks very specifically to many aspects of the believer’s ethical life, the Scriptures both in precept and example (Col. 3:5-9, 3:17; 4:1; I Thess. 5:12-21; Matt. 28:20) also set forth the need for providing guidelines to assist the believer and the church. Such guidelines shall be determined on the basis of the broader, basic principles of Scripture.

2. Although the church has received the responsibility of setting forth such guidelines, it is possible for the church to fail in her task because she either neglects to do it or does it in the wrong way or in the wrong spirit. As a brotherhood we confess:

(a) That we have at times been self-righteous and pharisaical in the way we have judged those who did not agree with us.

(b) That we have often neglected to give instruction concerning the biblical principles
that underlie the guidelines which the church has laid down.
(c) That we have too often made abstinence from disorderly behavior that hallmark of discipleship and spirituality, thus giving the expression of our faith a somewhat negative character.
(d) That we have generally been more careful to focus our attention of those areas and issues in which young people are more involved and vulnerable rather than on those issues which concern, more specifically, the lives of older members.
3. As a brotherhood we now declare and affirm:
(a) That we will continue to search the Scriptures diligently and with open hearts and minds, for guidance and wisdom concerning the life that pleases, serves and honors God in truth. We will also continue to set guidelines to assist all members to walk before the Lord in holiness and truth.
(b) That we will consider such guidelines, not as conditions for membership in our church, but rather as ideals, the attainment of which remains the constant goal and desire of each member.
(c) That we will, however, ask of each person who seeks membership in our churches, that he will accept these guidelines as his ideals and will manifest an honest openness and willingness to be instructed and nurtured in the way which the church believes to be true to the Word of God; that he will personally commit himself to diligent searching and prayer concerning areas in which he is uncertain.
(d) That we will not consider the guidelines once laid down as binding for all times. We declare ourselves ready to re-examine the guidelines as often as it seems necessary. When such examination reveals that laid-down guidelines cannot in truth be derived from the Scriptures, we will openly and publicly say so.
(e) That we will continue to be open to the Spirit of God and His Word to show us when and where new guidelines need to be laid down to assist members in establishing right relationships or patterns of conduct to new issues of life.
After discussion, a motion to refer point 2 back to the Board of Reference and Counsel for rewriting in a more positive manner was defeated.
(a) Discussion on the Board of Reference and Counsel Resolution concerning “The Individual Member and Guidelines of the Church” was resumed.
(i) It was moved and seconded to amend point 3c as follows: “that we will, however, ask of each person who seeks membership in our churches that he will accept these guidelines as his ideal for daily living, and that he will maintain an honest openness and The amendment was passed.
(ii) It was moved, seconded and passed to accept the resolution as amended. — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1969, p. 13-14.

1972 — Church membership and fellowship

Resolution on Church Membership and Fellowship:
To be a Christian in the fullest sense means being a member of the Christian community. Having been received into God’s family through the experience of redemption, believers are inseparably involved with other Christians. Because the church is the Body of Christ, it is inconceivable to think of a Christian in isolation from the fellowship and service with fellow believers.
While it may be possible to relate to other parts of the “body” without relating to an organized fellowship of believers, the possibilities in worship and nurture are enhanced by relating closely to an organized body of Christians. Believers will vary in
their desire and need for corporate worship and service and fellowship, but the essence of the family relationship in the Lord’s church demands relationships to other Christians. We therefore affirm:

1. That we continue to encourage membership in local congregations. This is supported both by the practice of the New Testament church where the unity and interdependence of the body of Christ were enhanced by membership in a local church, and for pragmatic reasons, such as legal requirements and for mobilizing the church into action and service.

2. That we encourage uniformity in our congregations of associating baptism and church membership. Except for special reasons we should not encourage baptism without having the baptized relate to a specific, organized fellowship of believers.

3. That the procedure of coming into a local church fellowship should be made more meaningful, both for newly-baptized disciples and those transferring from another congregation. Churches should seek to make both the prospective and present members keenly aware of their mutual obligations and privileges.

4. That we discourage absentee memberships except where a person finds it simply impossible to relate to a congregation where he resides. Churches and pastors should take active steps to encourage absentee members to transfer their membership to a fellowship where they can attend and work.

5. That we vigorously discourage the practice of dividing the congregation into “active” and “inactive” memberships for purposes of statistical reporting. For some churches to report only “active” members and for others their full membership for purposes of norms, etc., is a violation of the principle of brotherhood which is at the heart of church fellowship.

6. That we acknowledge and support the need for small fellowships (cell groups, etc.) within the larger, organized local body of believers. A more intimate fellowship is often required than is possible in the total church body. Such groups should seek to continue to relate appreciatively to the larger fellowship where some other needs can be met more adequately. The larger body should accept the presence of the smaller fellowships with love and respect.

7. That where a believer, for valid reasons, does not feel free to become a member of a local congregation, but nevertheless worships and works with a larger body, we allow such freedom and extend opportunity for fellowship in the life of the church.

8. That we encourage our members to express the unity of the Body of Christ by cooperating with believers in other congregations and denominations in our common witness and fellowship.

It was moved, seconded and failed to delete line one of the second point and revise the point to read “Except for special reasons we should encourage candidates for baptism to unite with a specified organized fellowship of believers”.

It was moved, seconded and failed, to revise point 7 by changing it to read ‘- - That where a believer for personal reasons, which he considers valid replace the first part of the first sentence.

It was moved, seconded and carried to change the word “participation” to “fellowship” in Point 7 of the resolution (the above statement has been corrected to read according to this motion).

It was moved, seconded and carried to accept the resolution on “Church Membership and Fellowship”. — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1972, p. 10-12.

1972 — Acceptance of non-immersed believers into membership

The Board of Reference and Counsel,
encouraged by regional conferences, churches and concerned individuals, studied once again the question of acceptance into membership of non-immersed believers and their transfer to churches within the brotherhood. As a board we recommend to our brotherhood that:

(a) We re-affirm that the M.B. Church practice only one form of baptism and that this be immersion (as stated in our “Confession of Faith”).
(b) Also, that we encourage those who apply for membership in our churches and who were baptized upon confession of faith by some other mode, to consider baptism by immersion.
(c) However, in view of the generally favorable acceptance of the practice initiated at the 1963 Convention, we as a board recommend to our brotherhood, that non-immersed members who have been accepted into the fellowship of local churches be allowed to transfer to other M.B. Churches, by letter.

It was moved, seconded, and failed to table the motion to accept the recommendation.
It was further moved, seconded, and carried to amend point c by deleting the word “concurring”, replacing it by “other” (the above statement is corrected according to this motion).
It was moved, seconded, and carried to accept the recommendation as amended. —

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

1969 — Individual member and guidelines of the church

Resolution 2: See under subject heading Church and Its Membership for content of this resolution.

CHURCH SCHOOLS (See also Board of Christian Education).

1966 — Suggested creation of a new committee for study of Christian education work in the Conference

1. That this Conference recognize anew the importance of Christian education in the local church, and encourage continued cooperation in the field of Christian education at the General Conference level.
2. That for the coming triennium the Conference delegate the Christian education work of the General Conference to the executive officers of the United States Board of Evangelism and Christian Education and executive officers of the Interim Christian Education Committee of the Canadian Conference. This committee shall organize within itself.
3. That this new committee study the organizational structure and mandate of the committee and present its findings and recommendations to the Board of Reference and Counsel for consideration and action at the next conference. All three recommendations adopted. —Presented by Church Schools Committee (now Board of Christian Education). GCY, 1966, p. 147.

1972 — Church Schools Committee proposal with respect to our cooperative use of Anabaptist curriculum materials

A paper (pp. 73-76 of 1972 General Conference Yearbook) outlining a proposal for a cooperative curriculum was presented by the committee. A few excerpts from it follow:

“Because we have in our past two basic influences in our understanding of the Bible, that of evangelical Anabaptism and that of evangelical pietism, and because we have in the past recognized and increasingly now recognize our responsibility to preserve and
promote the values that have come to us through these influences, and because we see in the newly proposed Anabaptist curriculum a resource for helping our churches to meet the need with respect to the New Testament Anabaptist emphasis, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. that we recommend to our respective Boards that they give serious consideration to becoming joint publishing partners (see proposal for definitions) for the purpose of assisting in the structuring of this curriculum material, which could then be recommended for use in those churches which would desire to use it, or, failing that,
2. to become cooperating users in which case we would recommend the produced material to those churches which would desire to use it.”

It is the current plan of the General Conference Committee on Church Schools to take this proposal back to the Canadian and U.S. Christian Education Boards for response and for reaction by the respective conferences -

The recommendation itself is:
“The General Conference Committee of Church Schools recommends to the General Conference that the area Conferences examine and respond to the Anabaptist curriculum proposals. The area Conferences or the coordinating board(s) representing them shall then inform officers of the Anabaptist curriculum consultation about the respective Conference decisions.”

It was moved, seconded and carried to accept this recommendation. (Yes - 116; No - 113).

— Presented by Church Schools Committee (now Board of Christian Education). GCY, 1972, p. 72-73, 76.

**Recommendation 1:**
The Church Schools Committee recommends that Board status be given to the Committee in view of the following rationale: (1) There is a need for continuity on the committee. (2) If the mandate given to the Committee is to be taken seriously, it must include more than information and consultation. It must include implementation and action. (3) If the mandate given to the Committee is to be carried to its conclusion, there must be a reasonable predictability of personnel and resources.

**Recommendation 2:**
The Church Schools Committee recommends that the structure of the Board be as follows: Elected at General Conference Convention for 6-year terms: one Canadian representative; one United States Representative; one at-large representative. The executive officers of the Board would be chosen from these three. (For the first election, the Canadian representative would be elected for a three-year term to provide for staggered terms.) Appointed by Area Boards: executive secretary for Christian Education in U.S.A.; executive secretary for Christian Education in Canada; two representatives from Canadian Board of Christian Education; two representatives from U.S. Board of Evangelism and Christian Education.

**Recommendation 3:**
The Church Schools Committee recommends a budget of $5,000. All three recommendations were adopted. — Presented by Church Schools Committee (now Board of Christian Education). GCY, 1975, p. 58-59.

**CONFESSION OF FAITH** (See also Eschatology)

**1966 — Review and revision of our “Confession of Faith”**

We recommend the following directives and guidelines for use in the review and revision of our “Confession of Faith”, to be referred to the incoming Board of Reference and Counsel for implementation.
1. The Confession of Faith shall be prefaced by a statement describing the aims, purposes, and uses of such a document. The following is a suggested preface:
The Mennonite Brethren Church has throughout its history emphasized biblical authority in all matters of faith and practice. This emphasis while exalting the centrality of Scripture also counsels caution in the use of any extra-biblical documents such as creedal statements and confessions. Such documents are to be regarded as descriptive more than normative. They are never to be given equal status with the Bible. A Confession such as this one is an echo of the brotherhood since it reflects the faith which such a fellowship believes and preaches. Its validity depends on its biblical character, its usefulness depends on its ability to communicate. The Mennonite Brethren Church accepts God’s revelation in its “inscripturated” form as final and considers the original documents to have been inerrant and reliable. It is now the task of the church to summarize the message of the Bible in a way which respects contemporary in speech while setting forth cardinal truth simply and clearly. A “Confession of Faith” represents a brotherhood in conversation. Here we can see how a group of believers respecting the Word speaks concerning those vital subjects which are the content of a biblical faith. A confession, however, cannot tell us how such a fellowship practices what it says. Since the evangelistic nature of the church calls for a concise statement which can speak for the brotherhood as it reaches out to those who are unchurched or who enquire, the Board of Reference and Counsel of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches thought it wise to rewrite the “Confession of Faith” in order to make it more readable in our day. May it serve as a guide and a messenger while exhorting the brethren to live the faith they proclaim.

2. The format shall be in contemporary language, readable, attractive even to youth or the totally uninformed, and geared to a senior high school level. Words and word forms shall communicate intelligently, but simply, to the contemporary mind.
3. The biblical passages serving as references within the “Confession of Faith” shall not be quoted but simply the reference given, allowing any version to be used by the individual.
4. The number of Scripture references under each subject shall be reduced and duplications of certain references shall be eliminated.
5. The length of the total “Confession of Faith” shall be shorter than the present document.
6. The section on “footwashing” shall be revised, referring to this practice not as an ordinance but making its practice optional.
7. The revision shall carry a clear statement of the date of publication, number of edition and other information that may be helpful for future reference.

The above recommendation, at first without point 6 but later with point 6, was adopted. It was also moved and seconded that we instruct the Board of Reference and Counsel to study the article on lodge membership as found in our “Statement of Faith”. Carried. — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1966, p. 27-28.

1927 — Discussion of revised (sixth) “Confession of Faith”

It was moved, seconded and carried that the sixth revised draft of the “Confession of Faith” be referred to the area conferences for further discussion and that only those questions raised by the area conferences be discussed at the next convention. — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1972, p. 22.
1975 — Acceptance of the revised (seventh) “Confession of Faith”

In the discussion of the “Confession of Faith”, the following changes were moved:

Motion: (i) The moderator of the Canadian Conference, in view of the action taken at the Regina Convention in July, 1975, where the role of the women had been discussed, moved (and it was seconded) “That the ordination to the pastoral ministry should be confined to brethren only.” This motion was defeated after a discussion in which both sides of the question were emphasized by various delegates.

Motion: (ii) re: Article XV. It was moved and seconded that the following be inserted in Article XV:
“God desires that Christians never render evil for evil nor railing for railing, but always do good to every person. Christians must not, for example, prosecute others before the law, nor bear arms, nor assist others to use arms. This motion was defeated after some discussion.

Motion: (iii) It was moved and seconded that the last clause in XIII be altered to read: “We discourage membership in secret societies” instead of “we do not permit active membership in such societies.” This motion carried and is reflected in the previously reported “Confession of Faith.”

Motion: (iv) It was moved and seconded, to accept the amended seventh draft of the “Confession of Faith.”

Amendment: It was moved and seconded to substitute and insert so as to have the last sentence of Article XV read:
“We believe that it is not God’s will that Christians take up arms in military service but that, where possible, they perform alternative service to reduce strife, alleviate suffering, and bear witness to the love of Christ.” The amendment carried. The question was raised as to why the pre-millennial position was not reflected in the “Confession of Faith”. It was pointed out that this position has never been stated in previous confessions of faith of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches. A further question was raised as to whether the Constitution as now worded encourages non-baptized believers to take communion with the congregation. No ruling was given. At this point the moderator called for a vote on the motion to accept the amended “Confession of Faith”. The motion carried.

Recommendation regarding the printing of the “Confession of Faith”

Motion: “That this revised ‘Confession of Faith’ be adopted by the Conference and be made available to congregations in pamphlet form.” Adopted. — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1975, p. 16-17.

CONSENSUS IN BROTHERHOOD

1969 — Consensus and change in respect to ethical issues

Resolution 1:
The whole enterprise of seeking uniformity or consensus of position on ethical issues, or seeking consensus to change such agreements in these specified ways, is dependent upon the agreement of all concerned that such action is legitimate, valuable and desirable for the Christian group to undertake. Such person would also need to agree that it is conducive to the spiritual health and welfare of individuals and the group, and that members of that group covenant together to maintain a certain position on an issue concerning which the Bible has little or no specific instruction to give.

1. Why seek consensus on ethical issues?
a) The sum total of spiritual insight and
understanding of any Christian group exceeds the sum total of such understanding of any one person of that group.
b. Individuals may develop certain “blind spots” in interpretation and understanding. These can arise out of their environment, their training or even out of personal desires. The group can provide a wholesome corrective for such distortions.
c) Standing together with a group in the practice of a certain action gives encouragement and strength which the individual alone does not have.

2. Why changes will and must occur.
a) The church of Jesus Christ is a living church. This living church must grow in all essential aspects, one of which is understanding of the Word and Will of God. At no time in the history of the church has this understanding been total or complete (1 Cor. 13:12). As the understanding of God’s Word and Will grows, the life and conduct of the church will have to be modified to reflect this growing understanding.
b) The church must also experience a growing understanding of the world in which it lives and works and witnesses. This growing in understanding may also call for a change in relationship and conduct. Such changes must always be made in uncompromising obedience to the Word and Spirit of God.
c) Situations and relationships in the world change. Some thing that at one time were good become corrupted; others come to be purified of their objectionable characteristics. As issues and situations change, we too must be prepared to change our relationship to them.
d) Changes do occur because of the church’s concern for evangelism and carrying out of the church’s mission.

3. Criteria of consensus and change.
a) The Word of God constitutes the abiding and unchanging authority for the Christian in all matters of faith and conduct.
b) While each individual Christian is to be involved in the process of interpretation and application to some extent, such action should occur within the context of the brotherhood and not in isolation from it.
c) Any change in ethical position should be motivated by the desire to be more obedient, more loyal to the Will and Purpose of God as understood by His children. The result of the change will then be a more consistent expression of such Will and Purpose.

4. Method of change.
a) It would be necessary to recognize that the process of seeking consensus is more than the application of the principles of group dynamics.
b) Changes in position will be sought in the following context:
   (i) There will be informed, sympathetic leadership which will assure that all available biblical teaching will be brought to bear on the issue to be decided.
   (ii) All members of the group will have opportunity to share in the discussion and freely express their insights.
   (iii) The atmosphere in which this discussion is carried on will be one of prayerfulness, openness, and Christian responsibility and concern.
   (iv) The group involved in such a process might be a local church, a regional, area, or general conference.

5. The authority of consensus.
Once consensus has been arrived at concerning an issue, such a decision is accepted in the spirit of love and voluntary submission as a guideline by all persons belonging to the consensus group. After lengthy discussion, it was moved, seconded and passed to amend point 2 by adding section (d) “Changes do occur because of the Church’s concern for
evangelism and carrying out of the church’s mission.” It was moved, seconded and passed by ballot (yes-226; no-196) that point S be amended so that the words “as a guideline” be inserted after “. . a decision is accepted in the spirit of love and voluntary submission. It was moved, seconded and passed to accept the recommendation as amended. — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1969, p. 11-12.

CONSTITUTION, CONFERENCE.
(For specific constitutional amendments, see under Boards to which such amendments apply).


The secretary reported the need for up-dating the General Conference Constitution and then presented the resolution as prepared by the Board of Reference and Counsel as follows:
“In order to publish an up-dated constitution, we appoint a committee of three — comprising H. H. Dueck, C. J. Rempel, and Harry Loewen — to study carefully the present constitution and subsequent changes and to present a new draft to the Board of Reference and Counsel for implementation.” This motion carried. — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1975, p. 51.

CONVENTIONS OF THE CONFERENCE

1966 — Future conventions of the General Conference

Recommendation 10 (as first proposed):
1. That we designate the second Sunday of August as the standing date for General Conference conventions.
2. That the area conference extend the invitation, but that the exact location of the convention be determined in consultation with the General Conference executive.

It was moved, seconded and passed that recommendation 10 be referred to the Board of Reference and Counsel for further study in the light of certain concerns expressed by the delegation. A revised recommendation is to be presented by the Board at a future session of this conference.

Recommendation 10 (as finally adopted):
1. That we designate the Sunday nearest the second Sunday of August as the date for the convening of the next General Conference sessions, at which time the matter of time of meeting be reviewed.
2. That the area conference extend the invitation, but that the exact location be determined in consultation with the General Conference executive.

It was then moved and seconded that recommendation 10 be accepted as amended. The motion carried in a ballot vote (yes-340; no-105) — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1966, p. 34, 38.

DIVORCE

1966 — Mennonite Brethren stance towards divorce and remarriage

Historically, the Mennonite Brethren Church has held the biblical position that the marriage relationship is intended by God to be indissoluble (what God bath joined). God’s original and divine will did not include divorce. It is because of sin that divorce and the all-too-frequent subsequent remarriage occurs. The Board of Reference and Counsel recommends that we reaffirm this position. While recognizing the sincere Christian motivation of our brethren in leadership in the past, we recognize that a great number of circumstances force us to re-evaluate our position on the manner in which we deal with
this problem. This increasingly prevalent social evil has become part of the acceptable way of life. Our renewed desire to witness to the world and live in the world while not becoming part of the world has brought us into face-to-face encounter with this problem. The trend toward urbanization, the fragmentation of family life by our vocational patterns, the rapidity and mobility of our population, and many other factors prevalent in our culture have made permanence in the marriage relationship more hazardous.

It is simply naive to refuse to believe that our congregations are vitally affected by the problems of divorce and remarriage. There are those people, presently living in what we have seen as a sinful state, who are being saved through the witness and testimony of our parishioners and these converts desire membership in our congregations. There are also those who are presently members or worshippers in our congregations who suffer and feel bound because of our pattern of dealing with divorce and remarriage. The problem is also accentuated by the fact that believers from other denominations, living as divorced and/or remarried, apply for membership in our churches.

Basic to our handling of the problem of divorce and remarriage is the scriptural teaching that all sin is forgivable when repentance is sincerely expressed and forgiveness appropriated by the offender. This forgiveness must also be available to those who have sinned by divorce and remarriage after divorce. We reaffirm our position that divorce and remarriage are sin and we encourage our ministers, teachers and congregations to preach and teach this, but we recommend to our Conference that we recognize the grace of God and His longsuffering to sinful men and women. We suggest that we remind ourselves often that all of us repeatedly stand in need of forgiveness and, like the accusers of the woman caught in adultery, actually commit in our heart the sins we have sometimes refused to forgive in others. In view of the command of our Lord to forgive both sins of the flesh and of the spirit, we propose that the following statements be accepted as working procedures in our congregations:

(1) In cases where divorce and a subsequent remarriage have taken place in the unregenerate state of the individual, we recommend that we recognize his cleansing and forgiveness by virtue of his coming to Christ for salvation through faith.

(2) In cases where two believers cannot live in harmony and love, and where separation
seems to be preferred to living in a constant state of turmoil, we recommend that they do not seek a divorce, even if they find separation expedient. Thus the path to reconciliation remains open.

(3) In cases where divorce and subsequent remarriage have taken place in the lives of believers, and if and when such believers come to the point of true repentance, acknowledge and confess their sin, commit themselves to a life of discipleship that includes maintaining the marriage vows, we recommend that we forgive and loose such a person from his sin and accept him for membership in the church. This recommendation is offered because of the conviction that God has said: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

(4) Such members shall not be eligible for any office which requires ordination.

A lengthy discussion followed. It was moved and seconded that we accept points (1) and (2) of the suggested working procedure for our churches and that points (3) and (4) be referred to the Board of Reference and Counsel for further study during the next conference triennium. The vote by ballot showed that the motion carried. (Yes-348; No-93). —Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1966, p. 26-27.

1969 — Mennonite Brethren stance towards divorce and remarriage

Resolution 3:
As the Mennonite Brethren Conference, we are deeply convinced of the sanctity and permanence of the marriage relationship. We believe, on the authority of Scripture, that it is God’s design that husband and wife live together in love and harmony until they are separated by death. But we also recognize that man, again and again, fails to live according to the will of God. It is with man who lives in disobedience to His will that God has called us to work. As bearers of His reconciling gospel, we are called to go fearlessly into this world of disharmony and corruption, believing that the gospel we bring is able to meet the needs of every kind of transgressor. We believe that it is then God’s will that such persons become members of some local church in which they can find the fellowship and the nurture which they need for spiritual growth. We believe that this is also true of persons who have been divorced, and also of those who, having been divorced, have subsequently remarried. Concerning such persons we believe:

1. Wherever there is divorce, there has been a violation of God’s will for husband and wife. Every divorce action has its history and this history includes a series of transgressions and failures of man to conform to God’s command. The actual divorce is the last and culminating act of disobedience in the series. However, as with all other transgressions, when these have been repented of and confessed, they are forgiven by God and therefore should also be forgiven by man.

2. We know that believers are not immune to the influence of the environment in which they live. As members of a society in which divorce and remarriage occur with increasing frequency, and in which many elements abound which loosen the mutual loyalties of husband and wife, some believers are caught up in this spirit, and finally terminate their marriage in divorce. Forgiveness and cleansing from such transgression come the same way as cleansing and forgiveness for any other transgression, through repentance and confession, even though this transgression occurred in the presence of a knowledge of God’s way. It may be necessary for the church to strengthen its efforts to lead the person or persons to a deeper commitment to the sanctity of
marriage. We believe that such persons should be received as members in a local church.

3. We believe that when remarriage has taken place, either while the person was not a professing believer or while he was, that the church ought not to seek the dissolution of this union. It would contradict the church’s witness to the sanctity of marriage if it insisted that this marriage should be broken up. Such insistence would only add to the destructive factors in the lives of the persons concerned and restore nothing. It would make no amends, correct no wrongs.

4. We believe that when a person has been received into the membership of the church as divorced, and then should wish to remarry, he should seek the counsel of the brethren concerning such action. The intensely personal nature of each case, and the great variety of factors involved, make one summary conclusion which would be equally applicable to all, impossible.

5. We believe that where two believers live together in a state of constant turmoil and tension, it may be better for them to separate, without seeking divorce. In this time special efforts should be made to strengthen their Christian life and to work towards the possibility of an eventual reconciliation.

6. The service such members can render in a church will largely be determined by what the membership is ready to receive from them. However, such persons would not be eligible to serve as ministers or deacons.

7. We believe that true repentance concerning divorce and/or remarriage involves the full recognition that such acts have violated God’s will and purpose for man in the marriage relationship, together with a genuine sorrow about such a violation. Underlying this recognition, there would be the deep conviction of the sanctity of the marriage relationship, and the fact that it is binding for the duration of life.

i. An amendment of No. 6 was moved and seconded to read as follows: “The services such members can render in a church will largely be determined by what the membership is ready to receive from them. However, we believe that a member who has been divorced, or divorced and remarried, should not be eligible to serve on the deaconate or in the ministry.” The amendment was passed. (yes-229; no-189).

ii. It was moved, seconded and passed that No. 4a be voted on separately from the remainder of the third resolution.

iii. It was moved, seconded and passed to delete No. 4a.

iv. It was moved and seconded to delete No. 4b. The motion was defeated.

v. It was moved, seconded and passed to refer No. 4 back to the Board of Reference and Counsel for re-writing. The Board of Reference and Counsel recommended that the first two sentences of No. 4 be allowed to stand, the remainder be deleted. No. 4 would then read: “We believe that when a person has been received into the membership of the church as divorced, and then should wish to remarry, he should seek the counsel of the brethren concerning such action. The intensely personal nature of each case and the great variety of factors involved, make one summary conclusion which would be equally applicable to all, impossible.”

A motion was made and seconded to accept the entire resolution as amended, including the recommendation of the Board of Reference and Counsel concerning No. 4. A motion was made, seconded and passed to amend the previous motion of deleting the phrase “For me it would be against the law of the land” in No. 3. A secret ballot was requested and the original motion was
accepted as amended (yes-319; no-57). —
Presented by Board of Reference and

ECUMENICAL RELATIONS WITH
OTHER CHURCHES

1966 — Church (organizational) merging
with other Mennonite churches

The following letter was sent to the
Mennonite General Conference and Old
Mennonite Conference by the Board of
Reference and Counsel in response to
enquiries about Mennonite church unity:
The communications regarding church unity,
received from both the General Conference
of Mennonites and the Mennonite Church,
have been seriously discussed at a recent
meeting of the Board of Reference and
Counsel of the General Conference of
Mennonite Brethren Churches. This Board
serves as the interim governing body of our
denomination.
We share with you an intense desire to
recognize the voice of the Holy Spirit as He
speaks to us in this day. We share as well the
conviction that inadequate and broken
expressions of Christian love must grieve our
Lord. We are also aware that more often than
we realize we as Mennonite Brethren have
failed to express in Christ-like attitudes and
actions our professed desires for love and
unity.
We would likewise wish to express our deep
appreciation for the increasing opportunities
in recent years to share in discussion and
fellowship with Mennonite and other related
bodies, as well as participation in inter-
Mennonite ministries such as M.C.C. and
affiliated agencies. We can testify that we
have always been received with utmost
kindness and consideration. We value these
opportunities to the extent that we would
certainly not want to deny ourselves the
possibilities for further fellowship and study,
lest we miss the instruction, admonition,
encouragement, and new insights so often
experienced in these relationships.
It is our studied opinion, however, that the
consensus of our brotherhood at the present is
not such that we could engage actively in
meetings and discussions having to do with
mergers or other bold steps to achieve church
unity organically. We recognize that it is
possible for us to be in error in judging both
God’s will and that of our constituency. We
will be happy to seek more concrete evidence
of our brotherhood’s wishes at our 1966
Convention and will also continue to pray for
God’s guidance and His will.
We are grateful for your interest and
graciousness in sharing your convictions with
us - We trust you can appreciate our response
in the spirit in which it is given.
In Christian love, …

It was moved and seconded that the
delegation approve the letter (as above) sent
by the Board of Reference and Counsel.
Carried.
In response to certain questions raised by
brethren of the delegation, it was pointed out
that close working relations in a number of
areas do exist, and that we welcome and
cherish such opportunities of cooperation. —
Presented by Board of Reference and
Counsel. GCY, 1966, p. 33-34.

1975 — Cooperation with, and aid to non-
Mennonite Brethren evangelical groups (in
mission programs)

Recommendation 1: Non-Mennonite
Brethren evangelicals.
Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services to
date has concentrated on establishing
Mennonite Brethren believers– churches.
One of the new mission opportunities calls
for cooperation with non-Mennonite Brethren
evangelical national churches (e.g.
Indonesia). Other new mission opportunities
will call for similar cooperation.
Recommendation: That we affirm personnel and financial aid to non-Mennonite Brethren evangelical groups where aid will help these churches in reaching their goals. Before a vote was taken, further information was given about the advisability of this motion, following which the delegates were asked to form small groups to discuss this resolution.

Motion: “That this recommendation be accepted”. The motion carried.

**Recommendation 2: Non-Mennonite Brethren non-evangelicals.**

Thousands of independent churches have formed around the world. Some are very orthodox. Many are quite far from the truth of the Word. Some of these groups (e.g., African Independent Churches) are asking us for help, especially for Bible teaching. Similar requests for Bible teaching are also coming from Catholic circles.

Recommendation: That we affirm personnel aid to non-Mennonite Brethren non-evangelical groups where our personnel can help these groups find a more biblical foundation.

A discussion took place, in the course of which a summary statement on the meaning and intent of this recommendation was given. Some reservations were expressed.


**ESCHATOLOGY**

**1975 — Eschatology and the future of Israel**

A request was made that the Board of Reference and Counsel give further study to the subject of eschatology as it applies to the future of Israel. Request granted. — Presented by Conference delegation. GCY, 197S, p. 46.

**ETHICAL ISSUES**

(See also Abortion; Alcohol; Divorce; Labor Unions; Tobacco; Political Involvement; Church and Crime; and Peace and Nonresistance)

**1969 — Consensus and change in respect to ethical issues**

See under subject heading Consensus in Brotherhood for contents of this resolution.

**1975 — Mennonite Brethren Church guideline on life/death issues**

See under subject heading Abortion.

**1975 — Resolution on Israeli-Arab conflict**

See under Political Involvement

**EVANGELISM**

(See also Missions-Foreign and Missions-Home)

**1972 — Resolution on evangelism and social action**

Resolution on Proclamation of the Gospel and Christian Social Responsibility:

According to the Scriptures, fallen man can be saved from his desperate plight only through faith in Jesus Christ — a faith which comes by hearing the gospel (John 14, Romans 10). Believers are, therefore, called to proclaim the gospel by preaching, teaching, writing, testifying, confessing, etc. (Mt. 10, Mt. 28, Rom. 10).

The effects of man’s sinful state are also to be observed in man’s misery, sickness, death, hunger, disaster and violence of many sorts. Our Lord’s compassion was poured out in ministering to these needs of men as untiringly He healed the lepers, the blind, the paralytic, and the crippled (the Gospels). The hope of redemption at the resurrection includes the body (Rom. 8). The significance of ministering to the needs of man in a social-economic order of life finds eloquent
expression in our Lord’s parable of the final judgment (Mt. 25). Our saving faith is tested on the basis of our deeds of love to men (Gal. 5:6).

We therefore affirm:
1) That we recognize Christ’s call to His followers to include both proclamation (evangelization) and social action (alleviating human suffering and misery in the world).
2) That according to Scripture and the example of our Lord, we regard the proclamation of the gospel and social action to be inseparable tasks for the believing community in any location in the world. It is understood that sometimes proclamation, sometimes social action, takes chronological precedence. It is also understood that while both are required by our Lord, without proclamation men cannot be saved.
3) That the statements of priority should be stated according to the scriptural pattern, “seek first His kingdom and His righteousness” (Mt. 6). This priority (seeking first God’s rule and His righteousness in our lives and in the world through Christ) comprises both proclamation and social action and, in the Scriptures, is placed over against man’s preoccupation with selfish concerns (what shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or what shall we wear?).

It was moved, seconded and carried to accept the above resolution.— Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1972, p. 8-9.

1972 — Support of Key ‘73.

II. The Board of Reference and Counsel recommends to this convention that we endorse Key ’73 and encourage churches to become involved as they find it possible. It was moved, seconded and carried to accept recommendation No. 2. — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1972, p. 16.

GENERAL WELFARE, RELIEF, PUBLIC RELATIONS

1966 — Merger of Board of Missions and Board of Welfare and Public Relations

I. Background.
The Board of Missions and the Board of Welfare have found themselves working side by side in South America a number of years already. This brought about some overlapping of interest and activity. As early as 1957 the Board of Welfare drafted a “Statement of Concern” which outlined the need for a closer working arrangement between the two boards. The matter was referred to the Board of Reference and Counsel for further action. A recommendation was brought to the General Conference of 1957 (Yearbook p. 118) which charged the Board of Reference and Counsel with the responsibility of suggestion procedures of reorganization. The two boards were asked to meet and discuss the issues of merger. These meetings and the discussion carried on by the Board of Reference and Counsel have prompted this statement.

II. Statement of Principles.
1. The Mennonite Brethren Church believes that the proclamation of the gospel is the primary task of the church. We reaffirm our understanding of the Great Commission as one of preaching Jesus Christ and teaching His disciples to do the things He has commanded. We are steadfast in the conviction that the gospel is intended to meet the total needs of man — spiritual, social, material, or other basic human needs — but that every ministry follows from the responsibility to give priority to man’s spiritual need, his alienation from God and his need for redemption through Jesus Christ.
2. The merger of the two boards with their respective responsibilities delegated to them
by the brotherhood represents the conviction that proclamation and welfare ministries ought to be integrated since our Lord and the early Church were concerned with such a total ministry. Such integration makes relief and welfare concerns, however necessary, subsidiary to the major task of proclamation, that is, they are no less spiritual in quality but arise out of a basic mandate to proclaim the living Christ. Such integration would also call for equal standards in terms of spiritual commitment for all who participate in the program whether they be long-term or short-term workers.

III - Implementation.
1. The Board of Reference and Counsel recommends that the new Board be called the Board of Missions and Services.
2. This Board shall initially supervise the total program given by Conference mandate to the respective Boards. We see no possibility of an immediate relinquishing of some non-General Conference activities now carried on by either or both of the two Boards. We recommend, however, that during the next Conference interim every effort possible be made to shift such area, district or provincial programs to those conferences and agencies. Such delineation of programs to be transferred shall be carried out by the Board of Reference and Counsel in consultation with the newly-proposed Board of Missions and Services.
3. The Board of Reference and Counsel recommends that the new board consist of fifteen members and that the administrative structure be patterned generally along lines suggested by the Overseas Advisory Commission. The supervision of the total work shall be subdivided into a number of commissions, with a number of secretaries responsible for areas such as: relief, radio and literature, personnel, finance, deputation and recruitment and policy.
We recommend that no present members of either board remain or be declared ineligible for election to the new board.
4. Because of the strategic importance of electing fifteen brethren who are capable, informed, and can adequately represent the various facets of the newly-combined ministry, the Board of Reference and Counsel asks the delegation for permission to act as a nomination committee for this, the first election.
We move the merger of the Board of Missions and the Board of Welfare on the basis of the above report. Motion carried. — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1966, p. 22-23.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION (See also ARCHIVES, CONFERENCE)

1975 — Translation of P.M. Friesen’s “Die Alt-evangelische Mennonitische Bruderschaft in Russland”... into English
That the General Conference register its endorsement of the decision of the Board of Christian Literature and the assignment of the Historical Commission to translate and print Alt-Evangelische Mennonitische Bruderschaft in Russland by P.M. Friesen into the English language to serve as source material for the understanding of our own historical background and mission, and that the Conference instruct the Board of Trustees to devise a plan for the printing of the book. Adopted.
— Presented by Board of Christian Literature. GCY, 1975, p. 150.

1975 — See under Archives, Conference for recommendations of Historical Commission which bear specifically on Conference records and archives

1975 — Appointment of members to the Historical Commission
4. (e) That the following be appointed to the Historical Commission: Peter Klassen
HYMNAL, CHURCH

1966 — Establishment of a Conference Hymnal Committee and production of an official hymnal

Recommendations:
1. That the current Hymnal Committee be accepted as the General Conference Hymnal Committee and be authorized to proceed with the publication of a new North American Mennonite Brethren Hymnal.
2. That the price of the hymnal be kept as low as possible in order to make it widely available.
3. That a first edition of 15,000 copies be printed.
4. That advanced orders be received for the hymnal from individuals, congregations and others, to be paid, if possible, in advance to furnish some capital for the preparation of the hymnal.
5. That the Board of Trustees be authorized to advance the necessary funds for this General Conference undertaking. This is to be done on a loan basis with the prospect that money realized from the sale of the hymnals be used to pay these loans.
6. That an annual budget of $1,000.00 be available to the Hymnal Committee.

All six recommendations were accepted. — Presented by Hymnal Committee. GCY, 1966, p. 128-129.

1969 — Mennonite Brethren Church stance towards participation in labor union activities

The Christian and Labor Unions:
More and more Christians, in a society which is becoming increasingly urbanized and industrialized, are facing the question of union membership and participation in union activities. Added to this is the fact that most professions and also many producer, retail and manufacturing groups form organizations which for all practical purposes are the equivalent of unions. To belong or not to belong becomes a pressing question. Or if one does belong to a union, to what extent can one, as a Christian, participate in its life and work? Concerning this issue we affirm:

1. That for the Christian all work, unless in itself it is against God’s commandment or is destructive and negative in its effect, constitutes a service to God. According to the creation mandate (Gen. 1:38, 2: 15), work is a part of the creation order.

2. That we ought not to forbid union membership, but we would counsel those who will be faced with the question of joining or those who are members:
   a) To join no union which demands primary allegiance from its members over all other commitments, even the commitment to God and his Word.
   b) To participate in no acts of violence or destruction, nor to join in any act of intimidation, whether officially requested by Church Music Committees of the area conferences continue to serve in the work of the hymnal production and that the Board of Christian Literature assume the responsibility for the distribution of the new hymnal.

The resolution was moved and seconded; the motion carried. — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1969, p. 107.
the union or not.
c) To seek to exert a Christian influence in all areas where such influence is possible. This would include opposing contemplated action or demands which are not just, even though the results of such activity might be considered a benefit for the members of the union.
d) To be willing to sever membership and give up work where continued union membership and work makes loyalty to the Lord and to one’s faith impossible.

3. That we as Conference and as churches support and encourage the work of any union which seeks to apply truly Christian principles in its relationship to the employer and that we encourage individual members to do the same wherever and whenever such opportunities occur at their places of work. A motion was made and seconded to accept the resolution. It was moved, seconded, and passed to amend No. 2 by deleting the word “all” and the phrase “nor should we judge or condemn those who are members of unions” from the first sentence. Also the word “exhort” was changed to “counsel”.
The original motion as amended was passed. — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1969, p. 17-18.

MENNONITE WORLD CONFERENCE

1966 — Organizational structure of Mennonite World Conference

See pages 19-21 of 1966 General Conference Yearbook for actual text describing this organizational structure. The recommendation concerning it appears under Organizational Structure, Conference, section.

MENNONITISCHE RUNDSCHAU

1975 — Resolution on Conference-subsidized mailing of Mennonitische Rundschau issues to South America

“That the General Conference subsidize the airmail cost of mailing the Mennonitische Rundschau to South America at the rate of $5.00 per subscription.”

Motion: “That the resolution regarding the airmail cost for the Mennonitische Rundschau be accepted”. This motion failed. — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1975, p. 50.

MINISTERS AND THE MINISTRY (See also ORDINATION)

1972 — Recruitment of men to the ministry

There is today a shortage of ministers and pastors in our brotherhood. We now need more pastors for our churches than are becoming available. This shortage presses us to give this matter serious study and prayer. In addition to the shortage of ministers, a concern has arisen over the “one pastor” system in our churches. The roles both of the layman and of the minister are being re-examined and hopefully adjusted so as to follow more perfectly the New Testament pattern. More and more, it is being recognized that lay people possess the gifts of the Spirit, and these thus become available to the ministry in the church.

Historically, our churches selected ministers and pastors from their own midst. Some thus called went out for further education and returned to minister in their home congregation. Churches usually had a multiple ministry.

Contrary to past practice, few churches today elect ministers from their own ranks. We depend upon our schools or look to other
sources from which to secure pastors when these are needed. Because most local congregations no longer elect ministers, the churches have also shown decreasing interest and involvement in the recruitment of ministers. There is too little encouragement (“shoulder-tapping”) and yet we recognize that (essentially) ministers must come from the local fellowships.

In view of the situations above described, we affirm the following:

1. That our churches heed our Lord’s directive for worker recruitment as given in Matthew 9:38, “Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.”

2. That local churches seek earnestly the gifts of ministry in their own ranks, encourage persons possessing the gifts and offer support and assistance in their further training and development.

3. That our theological schools be supported actively and be encouraged to recruit ministers, pastors and church workers, as the Spirit directs.

It was moved, seconded and carried to adopt the above resolution.—Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1972, p. 13-14.

MISSIONS — FOREIGN

1966 — Primary thrust of missions program of our Conference

Recommendation 1:
The Board of Missions recommends that the Conference adopt the following statement as a declaration on missions:

Statement of Missions — Forward Thrust

The General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches is deeply grateful to the Lord for His providential care in giving us open doors for missions and evangelism. We express our humble thanks for His abundant blessings upon the efforts of our missionary outreach, for the many people who have come into the saving experience of the salvation of God. We express our gratitude for the dedicated missionaries who have given of themselves to the primary thrust of the gospel. Acknowledgement is due, also, to the churches of our conference who have undergirded our missions program with prayer and supported it financially. Gratitude to God is expressed, likewise, for the many Christian parents who deem the dedication of their sons and daughters not too great a sacrifice for the cause of our Lord. And for the national church among whom we witness the evident guidance of the Holy Spirit, we give thanks to God. We would, therefore, call upon all our churches to rejoice with us in the victories God has granted in a day of the “Commission in Conflict”.

Enlistment for Missions. Missionary recruits are becoming fewer these days. Why? Varying and divergent answers may be suggested. The fact, however, remains that missionary candidates come from our churches and Christian homes. It is here where we must look for missionary recruits. We believe that God is still extending His special call to young men and women for missions and evangelism and that our churches, schools and homes of our constituency remain the major force in nurturing the missionary call. Although we may ascribe the affluence of our society as compounding the problem of missionary recruitment — and we need to caution ourselves against being determined by a materialistic attitude and way of life, we believe that the youth of our churches, with the finest education and preparation they can secure today, will respond to the special call to missions and evangelism once they hear and recognize it. We would therefore call upon our churches to join in prayerful supplication to the “Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest”
Involvement in Missions. In our commitment to the mandate of missions entrusted to us as a brotherhood, we are fully aware of the strategic role of the local churches, schools and families of their membership. Traditionally, families have been viewed as “the object of the churches’ ministry.” It is true that the church must minister to the families, but in this respect it must be elevated to a place where they become an authentic nurturing agency of missions in the program of God. What can the Christian family do in the promotion and ongoing of the Lord’s work? This is the burden of the church and it places upon us all a greater involvement of missionary education in our churches and in our homes.

Primacy of Missions. The World Congress on Evangelism held in Berlin just recently re-emphasized once again the “urgency and relevancy of evangelism,” and our “faithfulness to God ... in the proclamation of the gospel.” Much confusion exists today as to what constitutes evangelism and missions, but as a Mennonite Brethren brotherhood we re-affirm our understanding of the missionary mandate as being a ministry to the whole man, with the primary purpose of preaching the gospel, to make disciples, to baptize them, to gather them into churches, and to lead them on in the knowledge of Christ. As a conference we conceive our missionary assignment also to include “to unite local churches of a given field into an organized Conference which constitutes the proclamation of the gospel, directs and regulates its own financial requirements” (Guiding Principles and Policies of Mennonite Brethren Church Missions).

In keeping with the focal emphasis of the gospel, we recognize that specialized ministries such as education, medicine, agriculture, material aid, etc., must be integrated into the primary mission of evangelism and the building of local churches. Ministries of like specialization and of humanitarian concern must be related to the spiritual thrust of the gospel for the personal salvation of lost men and women. In view of the changing world of our time, missionary strategy of our brotherhood must take into account world-wide trends which necessitate serious consideration. The exploding world population places before us the gigantic task of utilizing men and means, in proper proportion, in the proclamation of the gospel, lest impersonal methods of evangelism become missions by proxy.

The ecumenical movement, too, has far-reaching influences on the total missionary outreach of our Brotherhood. We are grateful for every spiritual renewal by the Spirit of God; nevertheless, we must continue to support evangelical agencies for spiritual unity and evangelical concern.

The establishment of local national churches under leadership possessing evangelistic zeal shall remain our primary thrust, with particular emphasis on a “partnership of equality and mutuality” with the national churches. All true missionary work shall continue to be directed to the establishing of strong national churches, who in turn become the agencies of evangelism and missions. There is no single formula for success in missionary work. It is for this reason that the Board of Missions calls upon the Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches to give themselves to fervent prayer, “looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2); to move forward by faith, trusting God to make good His promises; and to accept the opportunities, the “Open Door” in a day when the “Commission in Conflict” is assured of ultimate victory because of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

It was moved, seconded, and carried to accept this recommendation — Presented by Board of Missions/Services. GCY, 1966, p. 103-104.
1966 — Mission organization in relation to national conferences

The Board of Missions recommends that the following statement be adopted as a guide in the organizational relationship of the Board of Missions and the national conferences:

Recommendation 2:
With the establishing of a national conference (having officially adopted a constitution and the “Confession of Faith” of the Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches) the work of mission enters a new phase which alters not the purpose nor the personnel but the legislative and administrative relations of the Mission to the work. While legislation and administration of necessity have been unilateral heretofore, the principle of partnership, of equality and mutuality, should become operative. Legislation and administration thus become bilateral and require much negotiation and meditation. Only as mutual understanding and confidence prevail will there be a true brotherhood.

   a. The national conference is sovereign in the administration of its church ministries and church affairs, including its own budget.
   b. The mission is sovereign in the administration of mission ministries and mission affairs in areas geographically or ethnically unrelated to the Conference unless otherwise agreed upon by both partners.
   c. The Conference and the mission are partners in the mission outreach to the unevangelized areas and communities or in the opening of new areas in close geographic proximity of the Conference.
   d. The assignment of the missionary shall be by mutual agreement between the mission and the Conference and cannot be altered by unilateral action of either partner.

2. Principles to Guide the Relationship and Assignment of the Missionary, the Missionary Fellowship, the Field Secretary, the Advisory Committee, and to Regulate the Budget, After the National Conference Becomes Established. (Note: This section is to be negotiated with the National Conference).
   a. The Missionary
      (1) All missionaries shall constitute an integral part of the national conference with all rights, privileges and responsibilities.
      (2) All missionaries are eligible to be elected by the national conference to serve in conference committees. Missionaries should avoid constituting a majority in a committee. In respect to his ministry a missionary should not accept responsibilities in too many committees or in a committee that could interfere with his assignment.
      (3) A certain number of missionaries will be needed to minister within the national conference in a Bible-teaching program, in pastoral assistance, and in professional services. These ministries by missionaries must not be denied to the national churches, and they will absorb a certain number of especially qualified missionary personnel for an indefinite period of time.
      (4) Principally, a missionary’s ministry must be one of “missions”. Thus only can he truly fulfill his missionary calling and do justice to the “sending churches”. The missionary’s main ministry is to the unevangelized world. This evangelism program, however, must be “church-based” and actively involve the national churches. Hence a missionary’s evangelistic ministry must be rendered through the church, but not primarily to the church, but with the church in an expansion program.
      (5) The administration of the ministries of missionaries functioning within the national conference is under the administrative body of the national conference in consultation with the secretary who administers the
expansion program, and who in turn is responsible in these matters to the Board of Missions.

b. The Missionary Fellowship and MCC
(1) MAC discontinues when a national conference has been properly organized (see Mission “Organization in Relation to the National Conference”, p. 15); the Mission Administrative Committee (MAC) as an administrative body is dissolved. From that point on any administration of missions or the expansion program is under the field secretary.
(2) The Missionary Fellowship and Executive Committee. As long as there are several or more missionaries on the field, the missionary fellowship continues. The missionary fellowship elects three officers which constitute the executive committee of the fellowship. The duties of the executive committee of the fellowship are listed under d., page 11. The executive committee is also to assume the pastoral responsibility in relation to the missionaries as stated in e. (2), pages 12 and 13. The Board of Missions may delegate additional responsibilities to this committee as needed and deemed advisable. However, in matters of administration, as it relates to the missionary program of the Conference, the Board will communicate directly with the administrative body of the national conference through the field secretary.

c. The Field Secretary
(1) Appointment. When the national conference duly functions, the administration of missions or the expansion program shall be directed by a field secretary mutually agreed upon and responsible to the Board of Missions and the administrative body of the national conference. Such secretary should preferably live on the field to become involved in missions and in the national conference.
(2) Eligibility. The field secretary may be chosen from the home constituency, or from the missionaries, or from the membership of the national church. The field secretary must be acceptable to the national church, to the missionaries on the field, and to the home Board.
(3) Liaison ship. The field secretary is not a member of the home Administrative Secretariat, though he exercises liaison functions between the national conference and the home Board and Secretariat. If he is a member of the missionary fellowship, he should not involve himself extensively in its activity nor hold office in the executive committee. His responsibility, duties, and functions are to be negotiated with the home Board.

d. Advisory Committee to the Field Secretary
Three brethren elected by the governing body of the national church, and the three executive officers of the missionary fellowship shall constitute a consultative and advisory committee to the field secretary.

e. Triennial meetings
In order to cooperate efficiently and aggressively, it is expedient that the national conference, the field secretary, the Board representative, and the missionary fellowship meet triennially to review the work and draw up a three-year’s program of advancement to be presented to the national legislative body and the home Board for review and approval.

f. Budget for church expansion
The budget for the church expansion ministry is to be mutually agreed upon, preferably on a three-year basis and shared on a percentage basis between the national conference and the mission. It can be subject to annual review. A number of questions were asked and answered. It was moved and seconded that recommendation 2 be accepted to serve as a guide and basis for negotiation and that this guide be subject to revision as the interests of the work of missions should require. Carried.

— Presented by Board of Missions/Services.
1966 — Acceptance of Panama mission

In faith in a living and omnipotent God and a faithful sacrificial brotherhood and in view of the need and possibilities of our day, the Board recommends:

field by Conference

Recommendation 3:
The Conference carried on mission work among the Choco Indians in Colombia for a number of years. In 1984 it became impossible to continue such work due to political restriction in areas of primitive peoples. Since the same people extended into the Darien, Panama, approaches were made from that Republic to minister to these same Indian tribes.
The labors among this primitive people have been greatly blessed of God and a goodly number of believers have been organized into several indigenous churches. The Conference, however, has never adopted Panama as a regular mission field. The Board therefore recommends that the conference accept Panama as a mission field and thus authorize the Board of Missions to continue the ministry in that republic and to the Choco Indians in the Darien.
It was moved, seconded and carried to accept recommendation 43. —Presented by Board of Missions/Services. GCY, 1966, p. 106-107.

1966 — Acceptance of budget and increase for expansion of missions program.

a. that the Conference approve the sum of $1,046,836 for the fiscal year, 1966-67.
b. that the Conference allow an annual five percent increase for expansion of the mission work and an increase sufficient to cover the inflation in the various fields. Adopted. — Presented by Board of Missions/Services. GCY, 1966, p. 107.

1969 — Acceptance of several budgets for 1970-1972

Recommendation:
We recommend that the following budgets be accepted:

<table>
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<th>Period</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>January 1, 1970—May31, 1970</td>
<td>$440,480.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>1,160,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>1971-72</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

After discussion, it was moved, seconded and passed to accept the budget. — Presented by Board of Missions/Services. UCY, 1969, p. 84.
**1969 — Board member visits to mission fields**

A recommendation from the missionaries concerning Board members’ visits to the field was read.

The statement emphasized the fact that all churches be made aware of the need for, and the benefits of regular official visits to the mission fields by office secretaries and Board members. These visits should include spiritual and administrative ministries and should be made on a regular periodic basis, rather than depending upon invitations from the fields.

It was moved, seconded and passed to accept the recommendation. — Presented by Board of Missions/Services. GCY, 1969, p. 84.

**1969 — Reduction of financial indebtedness of Board of Missions/Services**

The Board chairman reported that in view of a deep concern over the indebtedness of the Board, a group of 60 missionaries gave $2,400. He suggested that the delegation as well as the churches be given the opportunity to do likewise.

4. It was moved, seconded and passed to allow for voluntary pledges by delegates at the evening session to reduce the indebtedness and that the churches be given the same opportunity. — Presented by Board of Missions/Services. GCY, 1969, p. 84.

**1972 — Expansion of Conference missions program**

Recommendation 2:

The indebtedness of the last years made it clear that our Mission should not spend according to budget but according to the monies at hand.

We recommend that during the next three years the plans for expansion be communicated to our churches and that we expand our work as money becomes available by:

a. Cooperating with the churches abroad through a new Thrust Evangelism program each year. Thrust Evangelism is an effort to use all means of evangelism and church planting for three years in a high potential area.

b. Sending 20 new missionaries in evangelism and church planting. Our sister conferences in India and Colombia are asking us for more workers in new areas. Large populations in Japan and Brazil need the gospel. Zaire has a large population and neglected tribes needing to be evangelized. Radio work in Zaire is getting another look in an effort to reach more people. New countries such as Vietnam, Indonesia, Nepal, Bangladesh, and French-speaking West Africa appear to be open for our workers.

c. Sending 60 Good News Corpsmen in evangelism and church planting. There is a new stirring among our under-30-people. There are young evangels among us who are willing to go with hardly more than coat and sandals to spend their whole time in evangelism and church planting. These people would be called by their churches, funded jointly by the Board and the church,
and sent to serve under mature leadership at home and abroad.

d. Sending as many self-supporting missionaries as possible. The early church was scattered by persecution. Today the church is being scattered by vocation. There are significant work opportunities abroad where our people can be placed in earning opportunities in order to evangelize and plant the church. Recommendation adopted. — Presented by Board of Missions/Services. GCY, 1972, p. 38-39.

1975 — Basic priorities for Conference missions program

We believe the Lord is calling us to advance in both existing and new fields.

Recommendation 1:
It was incumbent upon us during this Conference interim to carry through a major evaluation of our ministries in our fields. We made a fundamental review of our role as servants in countries abroad. Through study and prayer we agreed to be guided by three basic priorities which we believe to be in line with the Scriptures:
We recommend that the Conference approve the priorities as follows:

a. Our first and foremost task is to evangelize and plant churches.

b. We will recognize the autonomy of the national church and transfer responsibility as soon as possible.

c. We will assist the national church, especially in areas of evangelism and training of leadership.

The majority of our workers are assigned to evangelism and church planting. The grants given to national churches are principally for the same purpose. A week of special training in evangelism and church planting has been added to the orientation for new workers.

In most countries today, the North American workers serve under the direction of the national conferences. In several countries agreements have been written to form joint mission boards which will become models for our future work. Ten and one-half percent of our budget goes to the national church to help it achieve its objectives. A first World Mennonite Brethren Consultation on Evangelization will be held immediately after the General Conference.


1975 — Expansion of Conference missions program

Recommendation 2:
The indebtedness of the last years made it clear that our Mission should not spend according to budget but according to the monies at hand.

We recommend that during the next three years the plans for expansion be communicated to our churches and that we expand our work as money becomes available by:

a. Cooperating with the churches abroad through a new Thrust Evangelism program each year. Thrust Evangelism is an effort to use all means of evangelism and church planting for three years in a high potential area.

b. Sending twenty new missionaries in evangelism and church planting. Our sister conferences in India and Colombia are asking us for more workers in new areas. Large populations in Japan and Brazil need the gospel. Zaire has a large population and neglected tribes needing to be evangelized. Radio work in Zaire is getting another look in an effort to reach more people. New countries such as Vietnam, Indonesia, Nepal,
Bangladesh, and French-speaking West Africa appear to be open for our workers.
c. Sending sixty Good News Corpsmen in evangelism and church planting. There is a new stirring among our under-30-people. There are young evangels among us who are willing to go with hardly more than coat and sandals to spend their whole time in evangelism and church planting. These people would be called by their churches, funded jointly by the board and the church and sent to serve under mature leadership at home and abroad.
Our budget has expanded within income and reserves. There has been a surplus each of the past three years. Income and expenditures have increased. These increases have been primarily caused by inflation.
Thrust Evangelism programs were begun in cooperation with the Brazil Association (1972), Brazil Convention (1972), and the Paraguay Convention (1973). Our experience with these required that they be modified to integrate more fully with our church work.
Seventeen new missionaries were sent out during the past three years. Sixteen veterans who had served previously were drawn back into the work. Attrition, however, offset the additions so that we have the same number of missionaries as in 1972.
Thirty-three Good News Corpsmen have been sent out. There has been no consistent effort in sending out self-supporting missionaries.
Conclusion: We know that God is still with his faithful churches and that with intense prayer and sacrifice He will honor us with this advance.
It was moved, seconded and carried to adopt the second recommendation.

Recommendation 3: Entry into New Countries
Our churches, through Missions/Services, have been and/or will be able to enter into new countries.

The Board of Missions/Services intends to continue to carry out the mandate of Christ on behalf of our brotherhood — to go into all the world to preach the gospel, to disciple the nations, and to build His church on earth until He comes for it — and to work within the mandate of the 1972 Conference and to expand this work as rapidly as the churches make personnel and money available for it. It is the understanding of the Board that the world’s rising spiritual and physical needs, paralleled by our brotherhood’s rising affluence, mandate the Board to challenge the churches in our brotherhood to more intense and sacrificial giving for Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services.

Recommendation of Conference: That we affirm the decision of the Board of Missions/Services to remain committed to the present fields-of-activities and to an expansion in these fields according to possibility and advisability and to expand work in Indonesia, Spain and Africa.

Motion: “That this recommendation be accepted”. The motion carried. — Presented by Board of Missions/Services. GCY, 1975, p. 109-110, p. 113-114.

1975 — Cooperation with, and aid to non-Mennonite Brethren evangelical groups

Recommendation 1: Non-Mennonite Brethren evangelicals
Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services to date has concentrated on establishing Mennonite Brethren believers’ churches. One of the new mission opportunities calls for cooperation with non-Mennonite Brethren evangelical national churches (e.g. Indonesia) - Other new mission opportunities will call for similar cooperation.
Recommendation. That we affirm personnel and financial aid to non-Mennonite Brethren evangelical groups where aid will help these churches in reaching their goals.
Before a vote was taken, further information
was given about the advisability of this motion, following which the delegates were asked to form small groups to discuss this resolution.

Motion: “That this recommendation be accepted.” The motion carried.

**Recommendation 2: Non-Mennonite Brethren non-evangelicals**

Thousands of independent churches have formed around the world. Some are very orthodox. Many are quite far from the truth of the Word. Some of these groups (e.g. African Independent Churches) are asking us for help, especially for Bible teaching.

Similar requests for Bible teaching are also coming from Catholic circles.

Recommendation. That we affirm personnel aid to non-Mennonite Brethren non-evangelical groups where our personnel can help these groups find a more biblical foundation.

A discussion took place after the presentation of a brief summary as to the meaning and intent of the recommendation. Some reservations were expressed.

Motion: “That this recommendation be accepted.” The motion carried. — Presented by Board of Missions/Services. GCY, 1975, p. 129.

**MISSIONS — HOME**

1966 — Home Missions removed from General Conference and attached to area and district/provincial conferences

(a) The vice-chairman moved a constitutional amendment by which the work of home missions would be removed from General Conference regulation and supervision and become entirely the responsibility of the area, district, and/or provincial conferences.

It was moved and seconded to accept this suggested amendment. Carried — Presented by vice-chairman of Conference. GCY, 1966, p. 129.

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EVANGELICALS**

1966 — Conference membership in National Association of Evangelicals

We recommend that since Canada has organized an Evangelical Fellowship comparable to the National Association of Evangelicals, that at such time when the U.S.A. applies for membership as a conference, the General Conference membership be withdrawn.

It was moved and seconded that the motion be accepted. The motion carried. — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1966, p. 22.

**ORDINATION**

1966 — Ordination of ministers from other denominations

Our Conference has spoken to this issue at various times. In the General Conference Yearbook of 1948, page 106, No. 1, we read as follows:

“The call and ordination of brethren to the teaching ministry of the church should be carried through in such a fashion and based on biblical principles that the church may preserve the deep consciousness that the Holy Spirit has called and appointed the minister into the position of service (Eph. 4:11).

“Such appointment must be carried out in complete keeping with the teaching of the pastoral epistles of Paul. Where individual brethren have appointed themselves as firstfruits to the ministry of the saints (I Cor. 16:1S), their service is not permitted to lead to any divisions within the church (Rom. 16:17).

“It is further necessary to consider that we do not call teachers of the Word from the churches outside of our conference fellowship because they frequently hold
teachings which we as Mennonite Brethren conference cannot endorse. It is further to be re-emphasized that all ordinations of ministers be carried out in keeping with the Conference policies as outlined in the resolution of the General Conference of 1933, which reads as follows:

“'The local church that wishes to ordain a brother should make its wish known to the representatives of the neighboring churches for their consideration and endorsement. Having received such endorsement, the church will call some experienced brethren who have the confidence of our Conference to officiate at the ordination.'

“According to a resolution passed by the General Conference in 1943, our Conference does not recognize ordinations of other denominations in our churches with the exception of those of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Church. It is, therefore, necessary that all brethren who, after an acceptance as workers in our Conference, even though they may have been ordained by other conferences, be ordained according to rules and regulations of our own denomination.”

Your present Board of Reference and Counsel believes that the above quoted resolution should stand in principle and be followed as a guide in all normal situations.

In recent years a number of ordained brethren of other churches and denominations have expressed a desire to join our brotherhood and serve the Lord in our churches as ministers and pastors. An alarming situation has developed in our Conference in that a number of our churches find themselves without a pastor and apparently we do not have enough ministers in our Conference to fill these pastorates. We should exhort one another as individuals and churches to pray more earnestly that the Lord of the harvest give us more laborers. Many of our Conference churches feel that in answer to their prayer for more laborers they are led to call pastors from other churches and denominations.

In order to find a God-honoring way to protect the ministry of our Conference and not to ask ordained men to violate their consciences, the Board of Reference and Counsel recommends the following:

The following procedure shall be observed for the “Ordination Recognition Service”:

1. The minister brother concerned should be asked to fill out the regular “Statement of Faith” questionnaire required ordinarily for ordination to the satisfaction of the examining committee.

2. At the “Ordination Recognition Service” the church shall charge the brother concerned to state openly before the congregation that he has accepted the Bible to be the inspired Word of God and the final authority in all matters pertaining to life and doctrine, that he has the inner assurance of being born again, that he has the conviction of being called of God to preach the gospel, that he pledges himself to work in harmony and in cooperation with the ministering brethren of our Conference, and to uphold, promote and support wholeheartedly the total program of the Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches.

3. The church should be charged to recognize the brother to have been called of
God to be a minister of the gospel, to commit
themselves to support him faithfully in
prayer, to hear from him the Word of God
willingly and attentively, and to support him
satisfactorily with material needs.
4. He shall be recognized and welcomed as
an ordained brother in our conference.
(g) Recommendation 11 was read to the
Conference by the secretary. In the ensuing
discussion it was pointed out by members of
the delegation that it was primarily the first
part of the recommendation to which the
Conference should respond. It was therefore
moved and seconded that this
recommendation be amended by deleting the
last paragraph (3). Carried.
It was moved, seconded and carried that
recommendation 9 as amended be adopted.
— Presented by Board of Reference and
Counsel. GCY, 1966, p. 34-36.

1972 — Ordination of ministers in the
church

Resolution on ordination:
Ordination, visibly expressed through the
laying on of hands, is being questioned as a
valid practice for today. From Scripture
references such as Acts 6:1-6 (appointment
of deacons), Acts 13:2-3 (appointment of
missionaries), I Timothy 4:14 and 5:22
(appointment of elders), it is apparent that the
early church had adopted the procedure of
laying on of hands. For the sake of order and
unity, the practice of laying on of hands
should be continued as a meaningful act by
the church under the guidance of the Spirit.
Concerning ordination, we affirm that:
1. In the New Testament the laying on of
hands is particularly associated with the
teaching ministry in the church. The laying-
on of hands is the recognition of a gift
bestowed by the Lord. It is the act by which
the church identifies itself with the gifts and
the tasks of the person, and consequently sets
him apart with the authority to exercise the
gifts within the congregation.
2. Since prayer is central in the laying on of
hands, it signifies the asking of God’s
blessing upon the person who is to serve as a
recognized leader or teacher.
3. The act of laying on of hands is also a
token of fellowship and group solidarity.
4. The laying on of hands presupposes the
inner call (ordination) by the Holy Spirit in
terms of gifts given to qualify the man for the
ministry.
5. The local congregation has both the right
to select from its members the one to be
ordained and the ones who are to ordain, but
to maintain and express the unity of the
brotherhood and because the ministry of
proclamation goes beyond the individual
church, a local church should involve a wider
constituency in the laying-on of hands.
6. Biblical evidence does not answer the
question about length or duration of the
ordination. Ordination, while symbolizing
authorization for the specific task, is an
induction into service, not status.
Note: We recognize, however, that laying on
of hands may be practiced in contexts other
than ordination.
By consensus, the two words “and express”
were inserted after the word “maintain” on
point S (the above resolution is corrected
according to this action).
It was moved, seconded and carried to revise
the second sentence of point 1 to read “The
laying on of hands is the recognition of a gift
bestowed by the Lord”, and to delete the third
sentence from the same point (the above
resolution is corrected according to this
motion).
It was moved, seconded, and failed to revise
point number 2 by deleting the last six words
of the sentence.
It was moved, seconded and carried to adopt
the resolution as revised. — Presented by
Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY,
There needs, however, to be a provision for the occasional election or appointment of temporary boards and committees on inter-regional or international levels. For instance, music committees function well in smaller associations of churches because they deal primarily with people in our choirs and in the worship of our local congregations. However, the publication of a hymnal cannot be reasonably accomplished by a small association of local churches and a temporary national or international committee may need to be appointed for such a purpose. As we move organizationally farther away from the local church, there will be less and less need for permanent boards and committees. Temporary committees may be appointed to function in a specific way for a temporary period.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, CONFERENCE

1966 — Structure of World Conference, General Conference, and other Conference organizations

It is not the purpose of this report to spell out the obvious need for or the nature of national, provincial or district conference, or local church organization. However, in seeking to evaluate the need for a World and a General Conference, certain observations concerning such further organizations seem to emerge. For instance, local church problems and ethical problems which may be unique to a particular area are best dealt with by persons in the general area in which that problem exists rather than on a General Conference or a World Conference level. Furthermore, home missions and evangelism appear to be most effective when related as directly as possible to the local churches associated in a provincial or district conference. Again, the closer one comes organizationally to the local church, the easier it becomes to place the emphasis on persons rather than on functions. Boards and organizations of youth, men’s groups, women’s groups, choir festivals, and so forth seem to function best in geographically smaller associations. It must always be remembered that primary responsibility to spread the gospel lies in the local church and with individual believers in that local church. The more that we can do on this level the more effective will be the witness of the World Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.

Recommendation No. 2: We recommend that the above pattern of organization be accepted by this Convention as a basis for further study and negotiation and that a recommendation concerning implementation be brought to the 1969 Convention.

After several brethren had expressed their appreciation of the intention of the motion, it was moved and seconded that it be accepted as presented. The motion carried. — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1966, p. 21.

1972 — Organization of Program Committee of Conference

III. The Board of Reference and Counsel recommends that the Program Committee of the General Conference in the future be constituted as follows:
(a) The executive of the General Conference.
(b) The executive of the District or Province where the Conference is to convene.
(c) A representative of the host church(es).
(Constitution needs to be amended. By-laws may be amended: Section 2, amending Part III.
(a) Amending the By-laws. Motion to amend Part III, the By-laws, may be voted on by the delegates at the same convention at which they are offered. A two-thirds majority is required to carry such motions.)

It was moved, seconded, and carried to
accept the recommendation. — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1972, p. 16.

PEACE AND NONRESISTANCE (See also Political Involvement)

1969 — Resolution on the further study of the subject of war and nonresistance

As a Conference we wish to acknowledge the legitimate concerns of those among us who are sensitive to the absence of a statement at this Convention regarding our position on war and associated evils. We wish to call to the delegates’ attention a Conference resolution passed at the 1954 Convention, a portion of which reads as follows:

“The Mennonite Brethren Church believes in nonresistance because… Nonresistance is a biblical principle clearly exemplified by Jesus Christ... participation in any form of war becomes impossible... War is evil, brutal, and inhuman. It glorifies might, greed, and selfishness. The nature of war remains incompatible with the new nature of a regenerated Christian.”

We are persuaded, however, that a more recent statement on the above named subject is needed. We recommend that a study-in-depth be carried on during the next triennium on the subject of involvement in war, and that a resolution be presented at the 1972 Convention.

While we recognize that such action may thus come later than desired, we present this resolution for the following reasons:

1. The proposed resolution came through channels that have not ordinarily been followed. Consequently we have had no opportunity to study the matter as we would like.
2. Resolutions relating to our stance on issues having such deep implications have generally been preceded by papers, study conferences, and other means of investigation.
3. There is some question whether or not a convention held in Canada, with Canadian delegates in the majority, should legislate a resolution that primarily concerns the United States.

a. A motion to accept the resolution was seconded; the motion carried.
b. A motion to delete the third section of the resolution was moved and seconded. The motion was defeated.
c. It was moved and seconded that the Board of Reference and Counsel present a statement reflecting the stance of the General Conference on war and violence, a stance which might be based on the General Conference statement of 1954; the statement was to be presented to the 1969 Convention or at a later time in the name of the Conference. The motion carried.
d. It was moved and seconded that the resolution read from the floor at the fourth session be included in the 1969 Yearbook. An amendment that the resolution be included in the Yearbook, but not in the minutes, was seconded; the amendment was defeated. The main motion was defeated.
e. A motion that the resolution read from the floor at the fourth session be duplicated for distribution among delegates at the next session was seconded. The motion carried. — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1969, p. 85, 87-88.

1969 — Actual resolution on war and violence

The fifty-first General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches in session at Vancouver, B.C., August 23-26, 1969, reaffirms its historic position on peace and nonresistance and against war in keeping with its “Confession of Faith” and its understanding of scriptural teaching.

We believe that the Christian’s new life in
Christ makes it inconsistent for him to participate in war or the destruction of life. The believer accepts Christ as his pattern (I John 2:6; I Peter 2:21) and his life is to be controlled by redemptive love. (Rom. 5:5; Matt. 5:44).

We believe that war and violence are incompatible with the nature and calling of the church. The church is called to a ministry of reconciliation and restoration of man’s broken relationships to God and his fellowmen. War disrupts these relationships and destroys moral and spiritual values by its greed, selfishness and cruelty. In the present world of unrest we recognize our Christian responsibility personally to live consistently with the principles of love and peace, as well as to promote peace and good will in interpersonal, inter-group, and international relations. The same principles shall apply in racial and industrial conflicts.

We believe that Christians must be “subject to the powers that be” (Horn. 13:1). However, this subjection is limited by the believer’s primary loyalty to Christ, his Savior and Lord. In any conflict between the demands of the state and the commands of Christ, the Christian “ought to obey God rather than man” (Acts 5:29).

We believe that the church has a prophetic role in relation to the state. Whenever the government fails in its divinely ordained function of administering justice and promoting peace, it is the Christian’s responsibility to express his concern, and to witness against the abuses of power and the miscarriage of justice.

We believe that as Christians we should serve our government only in such ways as are in keeping with our faith and redemptive mission. We appeal, therefore, to all our members to accept some form of civilian service when they are called to serve their country.

As a Brotherhood we pledge ourselves to seek prayerfully a fuller understanding and a more adequate expression of our Christian responsibility in a world of unrest.

A motion to accept the resolution was seconded.

a. A motion to replace “impossible” with “inconsistent” or some similar phraseology by the Board of Reference and Counsel was seconded. The motion carried.

b. A motion that the resolution be referred to the Board of Reference and Counsel and that the Board of Reference and Counsel at its next meeting publish a fuller statement through our periodicals in the name of the Board, was seconded.

c. An amendment to delete the last portion of the statement regarding implementation of the resolution was moved and seconded. The amendment was defeated.

d. The motion to refer carried. — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1969, p. 113-114.

1975 — Clause on nonresistance in the revised (seventh) “Confession of Faith.”

Amendment: It was moved and seconded to substitute and insert so as to have the last sentence of Article XV read: “We believe that it is not God’s will that Christians take up arms in military service but that, where possible, they perform alternative service to reduce strife, alleviate suffering and bear witness to the love of Christ.” The amendment carried. — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 197S, p. 17.

POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT (See also Social Action)

1966 — Mennonite Brethren Stance towards political involvement

Recommendation No. 3: Regarding Political Involvement

I. Our Historical Attitude Toward Political
Involvement
Historically, Mennonite Brethren have refrained from involvement and participation in political activities. At first, even voting at the polls was forbidden (1878). The last resolution, passed in 1890 by the General Conference with reference to political activity, reads, “That members of the church refrain from participation and involvement in the contentions of political parties, but are permitted to vote quietly at elections, and may also vote for prohibition.” Discussions and resolutions of our Conference reflect a strongly conservative position on the subject of political involvement. In addition to the warnings against political participation, the M.B. Church has also spoken against military conscription and service, urging men to choose alternative service in lieu of military service (1945).

However, throughout her history, the M.B. Church has issued repeated statements in support of the government and has urged members to be obedient and law-abiding citizens. On the subject of patriotism, the Conference adopted a resolution in 1943 which reads in part as follows: “…We confirm our undivided loyalty to our country and to our government which has graciously provided ways and means affording our young men a chance to serve their country without being compelled to become a part of the military power....” Elsewhere the M.B. Church says, “It is our conviction and belief that the honest application of the principles of righteousness, peace and charity, in an effort to establish national and international goodwill, will serve our country best and at the same time further what is best for all mankind.”

The growing complexity of our social and political society, however, lays upon the M.B. Church the burden to define more clearly and more specifically its position on political involvements. Further statements follow, which may serve as guidelines for new encounters between the Christian and the state.

II. Basic Principles for Christian Political Involvement

Our concept of the nature of the church as well as our concept of the nature of the state will determine to a large extent the nature and the degree of our political involvement. If we conceive of the church as the “Called-out assembly” (ecclesia) and as the “Company of the Committed”, which is then ultimately identified as a “Cross-bearing Community”, then it follows that involvement in the political activities of the state — which we might define as an agency ordained of God for the administration of justice in an evil society, and which is ultimately identified as a “sword-bearing authority” — must be severely restricted. Between the “Cross-bearing Community” and the “sword-bearing authority”, however, there is a “middle ground” which offers great opportunities for Christian involvement. The following guidelines should be observed in any involvement in the common life of society and state.

1. Christian political involvement must be selective

The Christian’s new nature, as well as his missionary vocation, will of necessity limit his social and political involvement. The principle of nonconformity to the world (Rom. 12:1-2; II Cor. 6:14-18) must be consistently applied to all inter-personal and inter-group relationships. At no time or place can the Christian suspend the exercise of his Christian ethical principles. This means that the believer must be highly selective in his political involvement in order to avoid any compromise of his faith and any restriction of his Christian witness.

2. Christian political involvement must be redemptive

Every activity of the Christian must be related to the redemptive ministry of the church. Political involvement has a tendency
to deflect Christians from their primary calling. The areas in which Christians can most effectively serve both their church and their country are the areas within the “middle ground” which formerly were considered the exclusive territory of the church: public education, public health, public welfare, etc. Although the institutions in these areas are now operated by the state, Christians may, in most instances, serve in them without compromising their biblical convictions. Such redemptive influence can also be exerted when Christians become members of school boards, of city councils, or of other civic organizations.

3. Christian political involvement must be prophetic
The Christian, as a member of the church and of the kingdom, must evaluate and judge all social institutions and political structures in the light of Christ’s teaching. He must witness against evil in all areas of life -- in the business world, in the professional world, in the entertainment world. The prophetic voice of the church will be a vote of protest against racial discrimination, social injustice, economic exploitation, and political corruption. It will also be a voice of proclamation of the truth, love, and righteousness that are to govern all human relationships. Above all it will be a voice that will call men to repentance, faith, and Christian commitment.

III. We recommend the following practical guidelines regarding a political involvement:
1. We believe that we should pray for those holding political authority that we may live in peace and quietness (I Tim. 2:1-2).
2. We believe that the chief concern of all Christians should be the extension of the Kingdom of Christ. Political involvement can easily become an “entanglement” which defeats this purpose (Matt. 6:33, II Tim. 2:4; Matt. 28:18-20).
3. We believe that government is of God, but that the church should not attempt to ally itself with any specific political ideology or political party, since none is intrinsically Christian (Romans 13:1-7).
4. We believe that the defense of the political order in general or of a specific political system is not the responsibility or duty of the Christian church (John 18:36).
5. We believe that the church and its members individually should be constructively critical of the political order, always seeking to promote justice, respect for human dignity, and conditions of peace (James 5:1-6; I Peter 3:13-17).
6. We believe that “super-patriotism” and “militant nationalism” are unbecoming to a Christian. We believe that as Christians we are called to a higher calling and that our primary allegiance is to a heavenly kingdom. Christians ought not to give undivided loyalty to any political unit (Philippians 3:20; Colossians 1:13).
7. We believe that it is proper for Christians to vote, to exert influence on governmental officials (provided that neither means nor ends are unchristian), and also under special conditions to stand for political office if neither the attempt to gain the position or the exercise of its functions requires a compromise of Christian ethics (Colossians 3:17).

It was moved, seconded, and accepted that the statement of specific recommendations (Item III above) include a recommendation encouraging believers to pray for the government. It was further moved, seconded, and accepted that the seven specific recommendations (Item LII above) stand as guidelines for the members of our churches. A motion was made and seconded to the effect that the Conference accept the preamble to the specific recommendations as it was read to and amended by the Conference. Carried — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1966, p. 23-25.
1975 — Resolution on Israeli-Arab conflict

The brethren of the Board of Reference and Counsel are deeply concerned about the polarization that is surfacing in our Brotherhood with regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict. We would, therefore, express a word of caution against the violation of our peace-position by an endorsement of either Israeli or Arab militarism or terrorism.

We recognize that the Israel of the Old Covenant has given us the Old Testament books in which the New Testament church finds its historical and theological roots, and that the church will always feel deeply indebted to Israel. Also, we deplore the atrocities which the Jewish people have suffered at the hand of gentiles in the centuries past. And while as a Brotherhood we may not have any political solutions of the Israeli-Arab conflict to offer, we feel that the pro-Israeli and pro-Arab positions, espoused by many in our Brotherhood, easily leads to an identification with Israeli or Arab militarism, which is contrary to the way of love as taught by our Lord.

We should, therefore, remind ourselves that the New Testament writers are concerned, not with the nationhood of any people, but with the salvation of all mankind. ‘For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and bestows his riches upon all who call upon him’ (Rom. 10:12). While we do not know all that God may have in store for the Jews and the Arabs, we know that there is no salvation for any person, except in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:12).

Whereas we must allow for different methods of interpreting prophecies concerning Israel, as a Brotherhood we should agree: (a) to pray for both Jew and Arab according to the Scripture: 1 Tim. 2:1-5. (b) to bring “the Gospel of peace” to all nations; (c) to minister to the needs of suffering peoples, be they Jew or Arab; (d) to oppose violence and atrocities when these are committed by any nation.

Motion: (i) “That the several suggested changes in the recommendation be incorporated.” This motion carried and the corrections were made.

Motion: (ii) “That the corrected resolution be accepted.” This motion carried. — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1975, p. 45-46.

1975 — Letter of Gratitude to Canadian and U.S. governments

Motion: “That the Resolutions Committee draw up a resolution thanking the U.S.A. and Canadian Governments for the freedom we enjoy and the assistance we received by way of material aid for our world-wide relief program.”

Amendment to the motion: “That John Redekop prepare this resolution.” This motion of amendment carried.

Motion: “That the recommendation with the amendment be accepted.” The motion carried. The drafted resolution is as follows:

The Right Honourable P. E. Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
Dear Prime Minister:

Mr. Gerald Ford
President of the United States of America
Washington, D.C.

Dear President Ford:

The 527 delegates representing 240 Mennonite Brethren congregations in North America, assembled for their fifty-third General Conference in Winnipeg, Manitoba, August 9-12, 1975, herewith express their sincere appreciation to you and your
Government for the extensive material aid and other assistance provided through the (for Canada—Canadian International Development Agency) (for U.S.A.—Agency for International Development) as well as other agencies during the past years. Our desire to be faithful in expressing Christian love through personal involvement and providing Christian material assistance in many parts of the world has been greatly facilitated by your Government’s important contribution. We look forward to continued close cooperation between your Government and its relevant agencies and our Board of Missions and Services as well as the Mennonite Central Committee. We pray that God will direct you and your associates as you face many difficult decisions during this time of grave problems but also of great opportunities. — Presented by Resolutions Committee. GCY, 1975, p. 179-180.

RADIO AND TELEVISION (See also Board of Mass Media)

1966 — Establishment of a Radio and Television Committee at the General Conference level

It is therefore recommended by the above body: “That definite steps be taken to establish a General Conference Radio and Television Commission to study the possibilities of future expansion in these areas for an effective outreach and fulfillment of our task to evangelize the world.” The recommendation in the report, to establish a Radio and Television Commission, was raised to a motion. It was seconded and carried. — Presented by a Temporary Committee of Mennonite Brethren Radio Broadcasting Group. GCY, 1966, p. 148.

1969 — Implementation of above proposal

A motion to charge the Board of Reference and Counsel with implementation of the suggestion of the Radio/Television Commission, and to go on record that the Convention views with favor further work in this area, was seconded; the motion carried. — Presented by Conference Delegation. GCY, 1969, p. 116.

1972 — Establishment of the Board of Mass Media

See under Board of Mass Media.

SECRET SOCIETIES

1975 — Mennonite Brethren Church stance on membership in secret societies

Motion: It was moved and seconded that the last clause in Article XIII (of our “Confession of Faith”) be altered to read: “We discourage membership in secret societies” instead of “we do not permit active membership in such societies”.

This motion carried and is reflected in the previously reported “Confession of Faith”. — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1975, p. 17.

1969 — Recommendations of the U.S. Conference in respect to a joint Seminary

About one year ago, the Board of Reference and Counsel of the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches presented a recommendation to the U.S. Conference and the Canadian Conference that we establish a joint Seminary in the greater Vancouver area, a Seminary that would represent all the churches of the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches.

Since a U.S. Conference Seminary is operational at this time, and is a work we feel the Lord is and has been blessing, this becomes a matter of special interest to our
Conference. The question was presented to
the U.S. Conference in August and after
discussion it was decided that the
Coordinating Board should study the matter,
find an acceptable solution and present the
same to the churches for their approval.
We would like to present several resolutions
for approval by your church. If approved,
these will be presented to the General
Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches
at their regular session in British Columbia
i. We express thanks to God for the Seminary
he has given us in Fresno, and pledge
ourselves to continued prayerful support,
praying that God will allow the school to
grow and expand under the anointed
leadership of men of God who seek to know
the mind of Christ.
ii. Resolved that we, the churches of the U.S.
Conference, declare ourselves willing to
unify our graduate theological training in a
Seminary which would represent the total
membership of the General Conference of
Mennonite Brethren Churches. Such a
unified Seminary seems reasonable in the
light of:
A. The close fellowship experienced between
the churches as well as the natural exchange
of pastors and workers.
B. The increased effectiveness which could
result from the combining of such resources
as faculty, administrators, libraries, and
finances.
C. The unity to be gained through such a
training program for ministers, missionaries,
and other workers would allow us to witness
with a clear, unified voice to the world.
iii. Resolved that the U.S. Conference ask
that the General Conference, in session in
August, 1969, vote favorably on the matter of
establishing a joint Seminary, and that a
Seminary Board be elected by the General
Conference.
iv. Resolved that if the General Conference
of Mennonite Brethren Churches is favorable
toward a unified program of graduate
theological training, the following be
suggested as to the implementation of such a
program:
A. To assure a continuous program of
training, the Fresno campus resources be
offered for interim use by the unified
program. These resources are:
1. The present program of instruction.
2. The faculty.
3. The campus, buildings, library, and other
physical equipment.
B. The General Conference Seminary Board
work with the Committees of Reference and
Counsel of both Conferences (Canadian and
U.S.) on recommendations to be considered
by the General Conference of Mennonite
Brethren Churches at their 1972 sessions.
Among the details to be arranged would be
such items as:
1. Details of the transition to be arranged
with the present U.S. Seminary Board.
2. Establishment of a time schedule, by
mutual agreement, for the gradual transfer of
the operation of the Seminary to the new
Board.
3. Consideration of permanent location.
4. Provision for the proper recognition of the
U.S. Conference financial equity in the
present program of theological training and
in campus facilities.
The above resolutions should be considered
by your church. Unless we hear a negative
vote from you by June 1, 1969, the
Committee will assume that your church is in
favor of these resolutions and stands ready to
support them and to act upon them.
Churches having questions about this matter
should be free to call, write or contact one of
the U.S. Conference officers.
The above, then represents the official
response of the U.S. Conference to the
request from the General Conference Board
of Reference and Counsel.
It is our sincere hope and prayer that God
will give grace and direction to us as we
consider this so vital question. Our prayer is also for you brethren of the Board of Reference and Counsel as you prepare this matter for presentation on the Conference floor.
Sincerely yours in Christ, U.S. Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches.
— Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1969, p. 34-35.

1969 — Response of Canadian Conference to proposal re joint Seminary

To the M.B. Churches of the Canadian Conference.
Dear Brethren, Greetings in our Lord’s Name!
You will recall that last July the following resolution was brought to the Canadian Conference by the Moderator of our General Conference:
“We recommend to both the United States and Canadian Area Conferences that we initiate plans at the 1969 General Conference Session to establish a unified Seminary in the Vancouver area.” (See pages 37-39 of the 1968 Canadian Conference Yearbook for details).
In order to study the implications of this recommendation, a Study Commission of eight brethren was appointed, representing our Conference Boards as well as all the provinces. (See pages 77-78 of 1968 Yearbook).
This Study Commission… reported its findings to the Council of Boards which met in Calgary on January 17th and 18th. The Commission had investigated the following:
— the cost of building such an institution and campus and of operating such a Seminary.
— the effect such an institution might have on our Bible Institutes and the Bible College.
— the value of such a school for our churches.
— the resources available in our Brotherhood in terms of students as well as faculty.
The Report of the Commission ran into many pages. The following, hence, constitutes but a summary of the conclusions to which the brethren came:
— The cost of building a campus and the operation of such a school, even if costs were shared with the U.S. Area Conference churches, appeared to be prohibitive.
— Such a school would have a definite effect on our existing schools, especially on the Bible College. Not only would financial support be diverted from the College to the Seminary, but students as well, and possibly some faculty members. The brethren thus felt that the College would be adversely affected even if a unified Seminary were established at any other location.
— There would be benefits in having a united Seminary program. Even if fewer students would attend a seminary than now attend our other theological schools, we would possibly have better trained workers.
— Such a school would serve as a unifying center for our entire brotherhood. If, however, this would mean the discontinuation of our theology program at our Bible College, the gains might not be as great.
— In order to serve our Brotherhood most effectively, a united Seminary would have to enjoy the confidence and whole-hearted support of our total Brotherhood. This whole-hearted support may be rather difficult to obtain at this stage.
After the Study Commission had presented its report to the Council of Boards and after considerable discussion, the Commission was asked by the Council of Boards to draw up a resolution to be presented to the churches. The Study Commission subsequently submitted the following, which was accepted by the Council of Boards:
In keeping with the decision of the Canadian Conference in Clearbrook, July, 1968, the Commission appointed to study the
brief presented by the moderator of our General Conference concerning the establishment of a joint Seminary with the United States Area Conference at Vancouver, reported its findings to the Council of Boards, which met in Calgary on January 17th and 18th, 1969.

The report of the Commission reflected the feeling that our Canadian Brotherhood is not prepared at this time, because of the great cost and because of the effect that it would have on our present existing institutions, to establish a joint Seminary.

Be it resolved, therefore:
1. That we are not prepared at present to establish a joint Seminary with the United States Area Conference.
2. That we encourage our College faculty to pursue efforts at establishing a working relationship with the Mennonite Brethren Seminary in Fresno, by such means as Summer Schools (alternating in Fresno and in Winnipeg), faculty exchanges, a joint publication, etc.
3. That we encourage our brethren in the Board of Higher Education to put forth every effort to develop our program of theological training to the best of our resources in funds, faculty, and students.
4. That the constituency encourage our youth to seek theological training.

Thus this brief and the resolution is being submitted to you at this time with the request that this information be shared with all the members of your church and they be given an opportunity to express their views on this matter. Particularly delegates meeting at the provincial conferences will need to be informed, since the provincial conferences will deal with this issue at their 1969 conventions.

In this way we hope to obtain a consensus of opinion of our Canadian Brotherhood when the matter is to be discussed at our Canadian Conference when it meets on July 5-8 in Winnipeg this summer. — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1969, p. 35-37.

1969 — Response of churches of Conference to proposal re joint Seminary

At the 59th annual Convention of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches the delegates considered the resolution which had been presented to the Area Conference during the summer of 1968. As directed, this matter has been studied by both the Council of Boards and the individual churches of the Conference.

In response to the resolution which reads, “We recommend to both the United States and Canadian Area Conferences that we initiate plans at the 1969 General Conference Session to establish a unified Seminary in the Vancouver area,” the majority of the delegates rejected its intent.


1972 — Appointment of a Joint Seminary Commission

The issue of the General Conference Seminary is not a new issue. To review the history of discussions would be too lengthy at this occasion. However, a survey of the more recent developments might be helpful.

1. In August 1971, at Denver, the U.S. Area Conference accepted a proposal of a structure for a joint Seminary operated by the two Area Conferences. They outlined the proposed structure of a joint board.
2. The Canadian Conference in July, 1971, appointed a commission to study the future of graduate theological training in Canada. The Commission, after studying various possibilities, prepared a recommendation to move towards the establishment of a General Conference Seminary in three phases including the following action and proposed actions:
a. Phasing out the Bachelor of Divinity program at M.B. Bible College — (1971 Conference decision).
b. Subsidy to Canadian full-time students at M.B. Biblical Seminary of $500 per person per year (approved — 1972).
c. Subsidy to Seminary of $500 per Canadian full-time student per year (approved — 1972).
d. Invitation to Seminary to recruit students in Canada.
e. Area Conferences to consider issue of Seminary at their next session.
f. If both concur, Seminary Board could be elected in 1975.

It was moved, seconded, and carried to accept the report regarding the Seminary question.

It was moved, seconded, and carried to charge the Board of Reference and Counsel, in the event that both Area Conferences concur, to appoint a commission to establish guidelines in preparation for the actions to be taken at the 1975 Convention. — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1972, p. 22-23.

1975 — Acceptance of the joint (unified) Seminary program

Recommendations:
Believing that God has been leading us in the move to a unified seminary program, and that the necessary legal and practical preparations have been made, the Board of Reference and Counsel recommends:
1. That the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches assume the ownership and operation of the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary as of August 9, 1975.
2. That the revised By-Laws be approved by the delegation meeting in Winnipeg for the triennial Convention of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.
3. That the terms of office or employment for the present faculty and administration continue until June 30, 1976.
4. That the General Conference assume financial responsibility for the operation of the $160,000.00 for the first school year, together with the increases in the next two years equal to inflation costs and program expansion approved by the board.
5. That the General Conference elect a Seminary Board according to the stipulations of the revised By-Laws and that the Board of Reference and Counsel provide a slate of nominees (as suggested by the Seminary Study Commission). Other nominations may be made from the Convention floor.

The Board of Reference and Counsel and the Board of Trustees of the General Conference will provide a more specific formula for financing the Seminary at the August, 1975, Convention.

The Moderator read the report entitled “General Conference Seminary Subsidy”. The following is a suggestion as to how the joint Seminary proposal be financed. The financial plan herein described has the support and goodwill of the Education Committee of the U.S. Conference and the Interim Seminary Board. It has also been discussed with some of the members of BOAC who have voiced their support. We therefore submit this formula to the delegates for consideration and information.
**First Interim 1975-1978**

Subsidy request estimated $160,000 per year
10% annual increase

1. 50% of subsidy
   - from USA: $40,000
   - from Canada: $40,000
   **Total: $80,000**

2. Board of Missions and Services
   15%: $24,000

3. Per Student Ratio *—only fulltime (not FTE or total students)
   Ex: 37 fulltime M.B. students
   a) 24 from U.S.A. $36,400
   b) 13 from Canada $19,600
   **Total: $160,000**

U.S.A. — Total Cost: $76,400
Canada — Total Cost: $59,600
BOMAS — Total Cost: $24,000
**Total: $160,000**

*Only fulltime M.B - students are taken into account on the student ratio formula.

**SECOND INTERIM 1978-1981**

Full support for the Seminary to become responsibility of the General Conference.

**Motion:** “That the recommendations as listed in the report under numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, be accepted.” The motion carried. — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1978, p. 27-28.

1975 — Acceptance of revised by-laws in respect to the administration of the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary Corporation

**Motion:** “That Article III, Section 2, E be replaced by the following clause: ‘The Board of Directors shall also include as non-voting members thereof the following:
1. The President of the Seminary
2. One member of the faculty of the Seminary
3. One member of the student body
4. One member of the Alumni Association
Such appointments shall be made in keeping with the representatives selected by the respective groups represented. These non-voting members may be excluded from all or any part of any meeting of the Board by majority decision of the elected members of the Board.” “(This clause is incorporated in the “Revised By-Laws”).

**Motion of Amendment:** “That the words ‘non-voting’ be replaced by the words ‘ex officio’.” This motion was lost.

**Motion:** “That the Revised By-Laws with the suggested change for Article III, Section 2, E, be accepted.” This motion carried. — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1978, p. 34.

1975 — Appointment of member-at-large to the Seminary Board

The vice-chairman of the newly-appointed Seminary Board read a recommendation and rationale for the same recommendation.

Recommendation to General Conference from Seminary Board of Directors, that the
Conference elect Peter A. Enns, Dinuba, California, as a member-at-large to the Board for a three-year term under the provision of the “Revised By-Laws,” Article III, (D).

Rationale: The new Board of Directors has met to organize and to review some of the priority items that need attention. We note with some concern that the present Board does not have any representation in the immediate area of the Seminary. We are also aware that changes will be necessary in the transfer of the Seminary to the General Conference. It would be of great assistance to the Board to have a member on the Board during this period of transition, who has been with the Seminary from the time of its inception 20 years ago.

This recommendation has the unanimous support of all Board members present at the Conference. It must also be understood that Peter Enns is prepared to serve if elected by the Conference, at the request of the Seminary Board.

**Motion:** ‘That Peter A. Enns be appointed to the Seminary Board as a member-at-large.” This motion carried. — Presented by Seminary Board of Directors. GCY, 197S, p. 176.

**SOCIAL ACTION** (See also Political Involvement)

1972 — Resolution on evangelism and social action

**Resolution on proclamation of the gospel and Christian social responsibility.**

According to the Scriptures, fallen man can be saved from his desperate plight only through faith in Jesus Christ — a faith which comes by hearing the gospel (Jn. 14, Rom. 10). Believers are, therefore, called to proclaim the gospel by preaching, teaching, writing, testifying, confessing, etc. (Mt. 10, Mt. 28, Rom. 10). The effects of man’s sinful state are also to be observed in man’s misery-sickness, death, hunger, disaster, and violence of many sorts. Our Lord’s compassion was poured out in ministering to these needs of men, as untiringly He healed the lepers, the blind, the paralytic, and the crippled (the Gospels). The hope of redemption at the resurrection includes the body (Rom. 8). The significance of ministering to the needs of man in a social-economic order of life finds eloquent expression in our Lord’s parable of the final judgment (Mt. 25). Our saving faith is tested on the basis of our deeds of love to men (Gal. 5:6).

We therefore affirm:

1. That we recognize Christ’s call to His followers to include both proclamation (evangelization) and social action (alleviating human suffering and misery in the world).
2. That according to the Scriptures and the example of our Lord, we regard the proclamation of the gospel and social action to be inseparable tasks for the believing community in any location in the world. It is understood that sometimes proclamation, sometimes social action, takes chronological precedence. It is also understood that while both are required by our Lord, without proclamation men cannot be saved.
3. That the statements of priority should be stated according to the scriptural pattern, “seek first His kingdom and His righteousness” (Mt. 6). This priority (seeking first God’s rule and His righteousness in our lives and in the world through Christ) comprises both proclamation and social action and, in the Scriptures, is placed over against man’s preoccupation with selfish concerns (what shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or what shall we wear?).

It was moved, seconded, and carried, to accept the above resolution. — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1972, p. 8-9.
**STATISTICIAN, CONFERENCE**

1966 — Conference status of statistician

Constitutional amendment.
(b) It was also moved and seconded that the work of the statistician be considered a separate function. Carried. — Presented by Conference Delegation. GCY, 1966, p. 129.

1975 — Conference status of statistician

Recommendation:
If the Conference endorses the work of the Statistician as being significant, my recommendation is to make this office a full or part-time position on the General Conference level. The problems, as outlined in the written report, make the reported figures unreliable and not worthy of serious consideration.
It is further recommended that the person be familiar with reporting procedures and the meaning of statistical indicators to offer beneficial aid to the Conference and its personnel. No indication is given in the Yearbook whether recommendation was adopted or not. — Presented by Conference Statistician. GCY, 1975, p. 172.

**STUDY CONFERENCES**

1966 — Study conferences for the study of theological trends

We recommend that three study conferences be held during the next Conference interim. Careful planning should precede the meeting and the delegation should also include leading brethren who are not ordained. Several steps might be observed in the planning of these meetings.
1. Reference and Counsel might decide on the issues to be discussed. Care should be taken to avoid overloading a program so that insignificant time is left for discussion. There should be discussion in depth.
2. Brethren should be invited to write introductory papers, two papers on each subject.
3. Two brethren who have read these introductory papers in advance should write a short response as a basis for discussion.
4. Study group participants should break up into small units for preliminary discussions, but final conclusions should come from the entire group.
5. One brother should summarize and from this should come a communiqué to the churches for study. Unless we also initiate discussion at the local level, we would again produce the effect of a handed down pronouncement.
6. At the next General Conference some of the statements could be accepted as speaking the mind of the Brotherhood. The strength and usefulness of this approach will depend largely on our openness to each other and to the leadership of the Spirit of God. We also feel that we have not deviated from one another to the extent that we could not find some common solution. What we need are love, humility, honesty, and insight. We have in our brotherhood the potential for all four of these ingredients.
Recommendation was adopted. — Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1966, p. 36.

**TEACHINGS; FALSE DOCTRINES**

1966 — Discussion of theological thinking within our Brotherhood
(See under subject heading Study Conferences for content of this resolution.)

**TOBACCO**
(See also Ethical Issues and Worldly Amusements and Vices in earlier compilation for 1878-1963).
Resolution 5: Use of Tobacco

The medical profession, both in the United States and Canada, is persuaded that the link between smoking and the incidence of certain diseases and premature death is established beyond doubt. This view they hold in spite of consistent attempts on the part of the tobacco industry to invalidate the evidence which has been gathered. The following is a brief resume of the facts which underlie the judgment of the medical profession. These figures apply to the United States but would also apply proportionately to Canada.

I. Risks in Terms of Quantity of Life

Lung Cancer — Every year 50,000 people die of lung cancer in the United States. The risks of death from this cause have been shown to be fifteen times as great for smokers as for non-smokers. The earlier one smokes, the more one smokes, the more one inhales, the greater the death risk.

Chronic Bronchitis and Emphysema — 80,000 people die annually of these diseases. Non-smokers are also afflicted with these diseases but here again the incidence of these among smokers is 15 times as great as among non-smokers. In recent years the increase in these diseases has paralleled the increase in the number of cigarette smokers. Between 1959-1964, the deaths from chronic bronchitis increased 90% while death from emphysema, during the same period, increased 104%. It was estimated that in 1964, three million people were afflicted with chronic bronchitis.

Heart Disease — Heart disease is responsible for more than one million deaths each year in the United States. This figure represents more than 50% of the total number of deaths annually. Cigarette smoking increases the risk of dying of heart ailment by 70%. If the smoker has hypertension, the risk of such death rises to 200%. The pooled findings of all the research centers in the eastern United States show very clearly that the more cigarettes one smokes, the greater the hazard of sudden death from “heart attacks”.

Cancer of Mouth and Throat — In addition to the physical irritation of the pipe, for instance, the death risk from neo-plastic processes occurring in the mouth and throat, is five times greater in smokers than in non-smokers.

Bladder Cancer — Although bladder cancer is, fortunately, an uncommon form of malignancy, it is interesting to note that only 5% of all bladder cancers are found in people who do not smoke. Quite recently it has been demonstrated that in cigarette smokers, an acid is produced which is excreted in the urinary tract and accumulated in the bladder wall, where it produces its carcinogenic effect.

Premature Births — Current findings reveal that there are a greater number of low birth weight babies and premature babies born to those women who smoke during pregnancy.

Fire Hazard — Cigarette smoking is responsible for one third of all property fires in the United States and ranks second to lightning as a cause of forest fires. It is probably not an overstatement to say that one million people die every four years because of smoking. This is a continuing loss; a loss which is not likely to change in the foreseeable future. To this loss most people seem apathetic.

II. Risks in Terms of Quality of Life

Not only does the cigarette smoker die considerably sooner, but his shorter life is complicated by a great deal of disability and illness. Typical of the loss in “quality” of life is the following list taken from Modern Medicine of Canada (July, 1968 issues, citing US figures):

1. There are 11 million extra cases of chronic illness each year.
2. There are 77 million extra days lost from work each year.
3. There are 88 million extra days spent in bed.
4. There are 306 million extra days of restricted activity.
5. There are one million extra cases of bronchitis and emphysema.
6. There are one million extra cases of peptic ulcer.
7. There are two million extra cases of sinusitis.
8. Cigarette smokers face a one-third increase in loss of time from gainful employment.
9. Annual salary losses amount to three billion dollars.
10. Women share these economic losses, since female smokers spend 17% more days in bed than their non-smoking counterparts.

III. The Christian is to be a faithful steward of his material possessions. Because tobacco meets no basic need of the body, spending money for it can be considered a violation of the stewardship principle.

IV. Risks of Enslavement
That people continue to use tobacco in spite of all the evidence available concerning its harmful effects, is indicative of the power nicotine has to enslave both mind and body. The Scriptures refer to the Christian’s body as a temple of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 6:19), and call on him to live to the glory of God in all his involvements (Col. 3:17). Using tobacco to destroy the gift that God has given him to serve, worship, and glorify God is a direct violation of God’s will.

Conclusion. Adults are responding quite appreciably to the appeal for giving up the cigarette habit, and while it is estimated that one million adults have quit smoking each year for the last several years, the fact remains that more than this number of young people start the habit each year. The medical profession has urged that governments control the manufacture of cigarettes so that tar and nicotine contents would be well below the danger levels. Moreover, they have suggested that 100 millimeter cigarettes be outlawed, dangers to cigarette smokers be placed plainly and honestly on packaging, that the advertising program of the tobacco industry be moderate and truthful in regard to the effectiveness of filters, and that adults assume an exemplary role for their children by refraining from this habit.

Recommendations:
1. In view of what the above information has revealed about the effects of smoking on the human body, and bearing in mind the biblical teaching that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit and that smoking is a contradiction of the Christian’s life and calling (and is therefore detrimental to his service to God and his witness to man), we as members of the Mennonite Brethren Church covenant together not to use tobacco.
2. We further pledge ourselves to support all legitimate efforts to curtail or eliminate the practice of smoking and to promote the prevalence of clean and free lives.

It was moved, seconded and passed that the secretary be asked to draft an additional paragraph on the stewardship issue involved. It was moved, seconded, and passed, to accept the above resolution. —Presented by Board of Reference and Counsel. GCY, 1969, p. 18-20.
We Recommend . . . .


Recommendations, Study Papers, and

other Leadership Resources
We Recommend . . .


Recommendations, Study Papers and
other Leadership Resources

***

General Conference of
Mennonite Brethren Churches

Compiled and edited by
Abe J. Dueck and David Giesbrecht

Winnipeg, Manitoba
Historical Commission
Conferences of Mennonite Brethren Churches
United States and Canada
General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches in Canada and USA

We recommend -- (part III, 1978-2002) : recommendations, study papers, and other leadership resources, General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches / compiled and edited by Abe J. Dueck and David Giesbrecht. – 2d ed.

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Foreword


During its approximately 124 years of formal existence (125 years including the unofficial 1878 convention), the Conference was at the core of Mennonite Brethren life, identity and ministry in North America and beyond. The Conference established Mennonite Brethren missions activity abroad as well as in North America in a more limited way. It sponsored a number of educational institutions, including Tabor College and, more recently, Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary. It defined many aspects of Mennonite Brethren theology and practice and was the guardian of the Confession of Faith. It was the vehicle by which a great deal of literature was published which informed and nourished congregational and family life. The regular conventions became the occasions where old friendships were sustained and new ones formed and where Mennonite Brethren separated by huge distances became bonded into a closely-knit spiritual family.

The conventions were conducted on an annual basis for some years, then later triennially, and finally on a biannual basis. These were occasions for fellowship and worship as well as for decision making. Minutes were carefully kept and published in the Yearbooks, initially in the German language and later in English. By the 1960s it became clear that the number of recommendations that had been passed was so large that it would be helpful to collect them and organize them so that they could be more easily accessed and utilized. The first person to undertake this task was A. E. Janzen, who compiled the recommendations of sessions 1 to 49, including years 1878 to 1963. Then, in 1978, Herbert Giesbrecht completed the compilation of the recommendations from 1966 to 1975. Both listings (Part I and Part II) were published in 1978 under the title, *We Recommend: Recommendations and Resolutions of the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches* (Fresno, CA: Board of Christian Literature, 1978). The methodologies of the two parts were different and the two sections were therefore not integrated.

The present volume completes the task of compiling the remaining recommendations for the period from 1978 to 2002. It should be noted that no Yearbook was published following the 2002 convention because the Executive of the Conference had completed the tasks needed to dissolve the Conference on the basis of decisions made in 1999. The final Memoranda of Understanding for the various ministries and other related material was published in the booklet,
1879-2002: “like a fire burning in my bones” (Jeremiah 20:9): General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches Executive Report: The Final Chapter. These materials are not included in this volume.

Another important series of events interspersed between conventions at various times and places were the Study Conferences that were convened to deal with topics that were of concern within the Mennonite Brethren community. These conferences often provided the resources which were used to formulate the nature of recommendations to the General Conference. The first of these convened in 1956. Most were sponsored by the Board of Reference and Counsel (later Board of Faith and Life). Others were sponsored by the Historical Commission or Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies in Fresno, as well as by other agencies. This volume includes a listing of all the General Conference Study Conferences and the topics and presenters of the papers as well as some other study conferences sponsored more regionally but with broader participation. These papers are available at the various Mennonite Brethren archival centers in North America.

Finally, the editors felt that it would be helpful to include some other resources, including the places where conventions took place, the chairs or moderators, and a brief history of the Conference, including its predecessor in Russia and the USSR.

The editors are grateful for the work of Gabriel Hamm in entering the recommendations from the Yearbooks into an electronic format. We are also grateful to the Historical Commission for its encouragement and support for this project.

Abe J. Dueck
David Giesbrecht
I. Introduction: 130 Years of Mennonite Brethren Conference History in Russia and North America

Growth and Adaptation

The Mennonite Brethren Church had its formal beginnings in the midst of religious turmoil in the Mennonite settlements in southern Russia (Ukraine) around 1860. Only twelve years later, in 1872, the Mennonite Brethren organized a conference, the first of the Mennonite bodies in Russia to do so. The major Mennonite body from which the Mennonite Brethren had seceded (often referred to as the Kirchliche, or Church Mennonites), did not organize as a Conference until 1882. Eventually the Mennonite Brethren also participated in this organization, called the Allgemeine Bundeskonferenz der Mennonitengemeinden in Russland (General Conference of the Mennonite Congregations in Russia). The first Mennonite Brethren convention (conference) was held in Andreasfeld, not far from the Chortitza colony, and the congregation there was known as the Einlage congregation. Thereafter conventions were usually held annually in the spring at various locations. The Minutes of most of these conventions are no longer extant. The last Mennonite Brethren convention, in what in the meantime had become the Soviet Union, met in Memrik in 1922.

The North American Mennonite Brethren Church had its beginnings in the 1870s when Mennonites in Russia began to look abroad for a place to settle where their religious beliefs and practices would be protected. The Russian government was beginning to encroach on various Mennonite beliefs such as nonresistance or pacifism. Between 1874 and 1880 approximately 10,000 Mennonites migrated to the mid-western states and another 8,000 to western Canada, particularly Manitoba.

Mennonite Brethren were not numerous among the first groups of settlers, but by 1876 they too began to arrive in more significant numbers in Kansas and before long they had settled in several states. The first Mennonite Brethren church to organize was the Ebenfeld congregation (1874) in Marion County, Kansas, not far from Hillsboro. Soon other congregations were organized in Henderson, Nebraska (1876) Ebenezer-Buhler, Kansas (1878), Bingham Lake, Minnesota (1878) and in Bruderfeld, Dakota (1878).

The first initiative toward the organization of a North American conference came in 1878 when Peter Regier from Henderson invited representatives from the other Mennonite Brethren settlements to a meeting in York County, Nebraska to discuss issues of common concern. Eleven representatives from two of the congregations met and issued a call for a conference at the same location in 1879. The first formally recognized
conference therefore convened in October 1879, only seven years after a
Conference had been organized in Russia. For the next 30 years, until 1909, the
Conference met on an annual basis at various locations.

Beginning in 1903 there was a growing realization that a new structure
was needed. Congregations by now were dispersed in various regions from the
mid-western states to the Pacific states and north into several prairie provinces.
In 1909 a new structure was finally formed. Three district conferences were
created—the Southern District (Kansas, Oklahoma and southern California, the
Central District (Colorado, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota,
Oregon), and a Northern District (Canada and Rosehill, North Dakota).
Subsequently some adjustments were made and a fourth district—the Pacific
District (California, Oregon and Washington)—was formed in 1912. The district
conferences usually met annually whereas the General Conference met
triennially.

For the next 30 years this structure seemed to serve the North American
MB churches adequately. However, significant changes were taking place, the
most important of which was the advent of a new wave of immigrants from the
Soviet Union in the 1920s following the Bolshevik Revolution and civil war.
By far the majority of these immigrants settled in Canada’s western provinces
and Ontario. Over 20,000 Mennonite immigrants came to Canada from 1923 to
1931, and many of these were Mennonite Brethren who often began new
congregations. In November 1945 the Canadian Conference of Mennonite
Brethren Churches (previously the Northern District) received its own charter
and in 1946 Ontario became a member conference. In 1948 the South American
churches in Paraguay and Brasil joined the General Conference as another
district, although by the late 1960s these churches withdrew in favor of their
own Conference. By 1950 more immigrants had arrived in Canada following
World War II and the Mennonite Brethren memberships in the United States and
Canada were about equal. Many other changes, particularly in education and
leadership models had taken place. By 1954 the various issues had come to a
head and the convention in Hillsboro, KS accepted a new conference structure.
Two “area” conferences were established, one in Canada and one in the United
States. Each area had subsidiary structures: district conferences in the United
States and provincial conferences in Canada.

In 1960 several other significant changes took place. First, the
Krimmer Mennonite Brethren joined the North American Conference.
Secondly, a name change from “The General Conference of the Mennonite
Brethren Church of North America” to “The General Conference of Mennonite
Brethren Churches” was proposed. Despite various concerns, the name change
was approved in 1963.

The final chapter of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren
Churches began in 1996 when a selected group of individuals met for a Strategic
Evaluation Meeting at Camp ECCO in California to brainstorm about the future of the Conference. Many younger leaders in particular felt that the Conference had outlived its usefulness and was no longer relevant to them. Not everyone was convinced, however, and in 1997 a Task Force was created to formulate recommendations. The recommendations it brought also proved to be unsatisfactory. Finally, at a convention in Hillsboro in 1999, the Conference agreed to “divest itself of the ministries it currently holds” and transfer them to the national conferences by 2002. This process, while difficult at times, was completed in time and a final celebration was held in Abbotsford, BC in the summer of 2002. Officially the Conference came to an end on January 1, 2003, although a legal entity remains for fiduciary reasons. Some ministries, such as missions, seminary training, and the work of the Historical Commission, are still carried out under bi-national arrangements. Likewise, the Confession of Faith remains the Confession of both conferences with mechanisms for changes. Adjustments will continue and it is anticipated that bi-national gatherings will periodically take place for fellowship and consultation. However, the General Conference as such has ended after approximately 124 years of existence.

Boards and Committees for Changing Circumstances

The General Conference engaged in various tasks which were primarily carried out through its Executive and various boards and committees. In the early period these were often quite ad hoc, whereas later the structures became more solidified. The first committee to be established was the Foreign Missions Committee (1885), although Mennonite Brethren mission work preceded that date.

When the first Charter was approved under the Kansas State law in 1900, the Conference was registered under the name, “The American Mennonite Brethren (sic) Mission Union”. In 1909 a change of name was registered. It now became “The Conference of the Mennonite Brethren (sic) Church of North America.” The missionary purpose was central to the Conference from the beginning, although the 1909 Charter adopted amendments in order to include specific references to home missions, schools, and benevolent institutions. By-laws then spelled out in more detail how the Conference was to be organized and how it would function. The Charter and By-Laws together became the Constitution. The Constitution made specific provision for a Board of Directors (Trustees), the Executive Officers, a (foreign) Missions Committee, a (home) Missions Committee, a City Missions and Deacons Committee, and a Publications Committee.

The first significant revision of the Constitution was approved in 1936. It included a reference to the Confession of Faith and also spelled out a more detailed organization as follows:
1. Executive Officers
2. Committees
   - Spiritual Welfare
   - Directors
   - Foreign Missions
   - Home Missions
   - City Missions
   - Publications
   - Schools and Christian Education
   - General Welfare and Public Relations
   - Auditing
   - Program

In 1954, when the Conference was radically reorganized, a new constitution was adopted on a provisional basis. Numerous amendments were made in subsequent years, but the 1963 edition included the following boards and committees:

   - Reference and Counsel
   - Trustees
   - Foreign Missions
   - Home Missions
   - Christian Literature
   - Education
   - Church Schools
   - General Welfare and Public Relations
   - Youth
   - Auditing
   - Program

In 1978 a provisional Constitution was adopted which included a Board of Mass Media and a Board of the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary. Home Missions was now no longer included, the Foreign Mission Board became the Board of Missions and Services, and the Youth Committee was eliminated.

In 1990 the Board of Faith and Life replaced the Board of Reference and Counsel and the Board of Resource Ministries replaced the previous Boards of Mass Media, Christian Education, and Christian Literature. An Executive Council was also added in 1990.

Confessions of Faith: Expressing God’s Unchanging Truth in a Changing Environment
The early Mennonite Brethren did not immediately draft their own Confession of Faith. The group that seceded from the main Mennonite body in 1860 affirmed its theological agreement with Menno Simons and with earlier Confessions such as the West Prussian edition published in 1853 (Rudnerweide). In 1873 several congregations adopted the Hamburg Baptist Confession of 1847 with additions relating to footwashing and nonresistance. But this Confession never became an official Confession of the Mennonite Brethren Church.

The first definitive Confession of Faith of the Mennonite Brethren Church was adopted in Russia in 1900 and printed in Halbstadt in 1902. In 1902, the Mennonite Brethren Conference of North America also officially adopted this Confession. The first American edition was published in German in 1916. The first American English edition by H. F. Toews appeared in 1917.

Only minor changes were made in this Confession during the next half-century. However, in 1966 the Conference agreed to review the Confession and prepare a revised edition in contemporary language. After lengthy deliberations and the submission of many drafts, the revised Confession finally was adopted in 1975 and published in 1976. This Confession, unlike the previous one, had a rather short life span.

The next round of revisions came less than twenty years later. The process began in 1993 and was not completed until 1999 when the Conference accepted the Confession as well as Sidewalk, Digest, and Liturgical versions. By then it was clear that the General Conference was nearing its end and there was a strong desire to pass the completed project on to the national conferences. The Confession was renamed “Confession of Faith of the United States and Canadian Conferences of the Mennonite Brethren Churches.” A process for future amendments was also put in place.

The Future

The new reality of two national Mennonite Brethren conferences in North America is still at a very elementary stage and needs to be tested over time. Some of the ministries, particularly that of global missions, have made the transition without much difficulty, partly because missions relies on voluntary contributions for its operations and partly because missions programs are essentially carried out abroad. The Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary is making the transition more gradually and with more difficulty. The Confessional issues will probably not be formally tested very soon, although preexisting regional differences may become more pronounced and create more tensions in the future. The Historical Commission, which continues as a bi-
national structure, has a more limited mandate and may be able to continue with relatively little change.

While the General Conference as a formal structure has disappeared from North America, it is clear that a rich legacy remains and that the recommendations and programs of the past will live on and draw from the legacy of the past century in many ways. Furthermore, at the same time that the General Conference has gradually disappeared, a new entity known as the International Committee of Mennonite Brethren (ICOMB) has come into existence. ICMB had its roots in the World Mennonite Brethren Missions Consultation in 1988 and has gradually evolved into a permanent structure with representatives from each of the national conferences. In time it may take on some of the functions which were carried out by the North American bodies in the past, although there are serious limitations to global efforts in many areas.

Mennonite Brethren have proven themselves to be open to change and have often prided themselves about being future-oriented. The degree to which they will continue to fulfill their mission in the future will also depend on the extent to which they can take advantage of the rich resources of their past, some of which are incorporated in the pages which follow.

Abe J. Dueck

### III. General Conference Conventions, 1878 – 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Convention</th>
<th>Convention Number</th>
<th>Meeting Place</th>
<th>Moderator</th>
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<td>Hamilton Co., NB</td>
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<td>Gnadenau, KS</td>
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<td>Cottonwood Co., MN</td>
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<td>Abbotsford, BC</td>
<td>Herb Koop</td>
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III. General Conference Recommendations

1. Board of Christian Education

1978: Foundation Series Sunday School Material (186)

The Board of Christian Education recommends that the General Conference Board of Christian Education assume the responsibility of cooperative user on behalf of the General Conference

1981: Curriculum endorsement (24-27)

1. The Board of Christian Education recognizes four Sunday school curricula as of approximately equal quality, though with different strengths and weaknesses. Scripture Press, Foundation Series, Gospel Light and David C. Cook curricula are all Biblically based and evangelical. In order to provide for the Sunday school curriculum concerns of our Mennonite Brethren Churches, we recommend that the Sunday school curricula for use in Mennonite Brethren churches be the Scripture Press or Foundation Series materials. We further recommend that the Christian Education personnel together with publications and marketing personnel staff continue conversation with Scripture Press involving a discount contract, imprint, teacher manual inserts and editorial changes. We further recommend that we continue to provide editorial input in Foundation Series, youth and adult materials, as we have done in the past five years.

2. We recommend that we discontinue publication of the Adult Quarterly.

3. We recommend that we discontinue publication of the German Lektionsheft.

4. We recommend that churches desiring German material use the Bibelstudium produced by the General Conference Mennonite Church.

Recommendation #1 was accepted.
Recommendation #2 was defeated.
Recommendation #3 was defeated.
Recommendation #4 was withdrawn.
M/s/e to rescind action on Recommendation #1.
M/s/c that we refer this matter, namely Recommendation #1, back to the Board for further consideration and study, to be brought back to this convention at a later time.

M/s/c That we lift Recommendation #1 from the table.

Revised Recommendation #1

Rationale
In order to encourage conference unity at least a minimum of curriculum options ought to be offered.

In view of the high percentage of Scripture Press Material usage, it is possible to enter into contract relationships with Scripture Press. This has editorial and financial benefits. This gives us the opportunity to develop Mennonite Brethren influenced materials. In order to provide a total curriculum plan for the entire age spectrum, it is usually best to use materials from the same publishers throughout the Sunday school.

Motion: Although we recognize the autonomy of the local church, we recommend that the Sunday school curricula for use in Mennonite Brethren churches be the Scripture Press or Foundation Series materials.

Amendment: That we delete the part re: the autonomy of the local church.

M/s/c (The amended motion was carried)

Recommendation 1.2

That the Christian Education personnel together with publications and marketing personnel shall continue conversation with Scripture Press and when it is feasible, enter into an agreement with Scripture Press, involving a discount contract, imprint, teacher manual inserts and editorial changes.

M/s/c

Recommendation 1.3

We further recommend that we continue to provide editorial input in Foundation Series, youth and adult materials, as we have done in the past five years.

M/s/c
**1990: Lektionsheft** (40,42)

That we continue to subsidize the publication of the *Lektionsheft* for coming triennium.

*M/s/c*

That we proceed with the development of a *Faith-Family Focus Curriculum* series

*M/s/c* to encourage the Board of Resource Ministries to proceed with this recommendation.
2. Board of Christian Literature

1978

**Direction (126)**
That support be given to the periodical *Direction* (publication of the schools of higher education) in the amount of $800 per year during the next triennium.  
**M/s/c**

**Writers’ Conference (126)**
That a conference-wide writers conference be sponsored during the 1978-81 triennium, as well as continuing to assist institutes and colleges with regional conferences.  
**Accepted**

**Youth Publications (126)**
That responsibility for publications directed to the ministry to youth be assigned to the Board of Christian Education of the General Conference.  
**Accepted**

**Publications (126-27)**
That the conference endorse publication projections as given in the report.  
**Accepted**

**Publications Coordinator (127)**
That BCL be authorized to engage the equivalent of a full-time coordinator of conference publications.  While this position will be funded through the BCL, it is to be understood that the services of this individual will be available for consultation (and editing as time allows) to other agencies of the conference.  
A motion was made to vote by ballot, but this motion was defeated.  
**Accepted**  *Editorial Note: Original motion was accepted.*

**Elmer Martens (127)**
That Elmer A. Martens be given a vote of thanks for his 12 years as Chairman of the Board of Christian Literature, for his vision and dedication to the task of publications within our conference.  
**Accepted**

1981 (160)

1. That the conference grant the BCL an extension in mandate to include increased contact with and cooperative ventures with sister conferences
outside of the United States and Canada in the fields of Christian literature and historical endeavors.  
Accepted

2. That the Conference endorse the mandate of BCL and its relationships to the two national boards of publication as outlined.  Accepted

3. That the Conference endorse publications as outlined in this report.  Accepted

4. That the conference endorse a system of writing off printing costs using the BCL budget to decrease BCL indebtedness when necessary.  Accepted

5. That the project of indexing the Zionsbote as proposed by the Historical Commission be approved.  Cost would be $3,500 per year; this amount has not been included in the Historical Commission budget.  Accepted

1984 (120, 123, 125)

1. That all book publishing under the Kindred Press label at the General Conference and the national conference levels be assumed by BCL.  
M/s/c

2. That Gilbert Brandt be hired as full-time BCL managing editor.  
M/s/c  [Editorial Note: The job description of the Managing Editor is printed on pp. 120-122 of the 1984 Yearbook.]

3. That the General Conference confirm the action of BCL to market Kindred Press publications through Herald Press.  This agreement is to continue unless either or both parties to the agreement find it to be unsatisfactory.  
M/s/c

Discussion: A delegate from Quebec asked that some publications be translated into French and/or Spanish.  A retired Zaire missionary affirmed this suggestion.  That the Board of Christian Literature be encouraged to do so.  
M/s/c
3. Board of Mass Media (36)

We recommend that the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches endorse participation in the inter-Mennonite Media Group project known as the “Responsible Living One Hour TV Special” and that we budget $5,000.00 per year for three years in support of this project.

Accepted
4. Board of Missions and Services


1978

Expansion in Bangladesh (108-109)

The following explanation and recommendation was made:

Bangladesh, northeast of India, has the highest population density in the world. It is a Muslim country and reluctantly has accepted a few Protestant missionaries. Mennonite Central Committee responded to the intense physical needs of Bangladesh in 1972. Soon MCC inquired whether the Asian and North American Mennonites would like to follow up their relief work with mission work. Through this impetus, Asia Mennonite Services, an Asian Mennonite mission board, was formed and simultaneously the Board of Missions/Services seconded two missionary nurses to work with MCC in Bangladesh in anticipation that they would become a part of Asia Mennonite Services.

The missionary nurses found spiritual needs and asked for additional personnel. The India churches sent an Indian Mennonite Brethren couple for one term. Asia Mennonite Services has invited Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services to apply for a mission charter.

Recommendation: That Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services enter Bangladesh for church planting and community development ministries.

Accepted

Expansion of work among Russian-speaking People (109-110)

That Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services expand its ministry to Russian-speaking people.

Rationale

The first Mennonite Brethren mission work was among Russian neighbors. With the emigration and then flight of many Mennonite Brethren, our Russian mission work reverted to zero. About 20 years ago this work was
revived through the Russian radio broadcasts of Mennonite Brethren Communications.

During the past two decades contacts have been re-established with Russian believers. During the past five years many Mennonite Brethren have been granted exit visas. Some of these have already begun evangelistic ministry to Russia.

In these five years repeated reports have come from Russia about a new spiritual stirring among young and old alike. It seems that the new spiritual interest in Russia and our new resources through the Umsiedler in Germany make it incumbent upon the Board of Missions/Services to develop a comprehensive approach to Russian evangelism and church planting.

**Motion:** That we refer this recommendation and its preamble back to the Board for a re-working.

M/s/c

Office Relocation (111)

**Motion:** That a forum seriously reconsider moving the mission office to Winnipeg by 1981 and moving the United States desk to Fresno.

**Amendment:** That the words “by 1981” be eliminated and to add the words ‘and that this question be brought back to the convention in 1981.

**Carried**

**Revised Motion:** That a forum seriously consider moving the mission office to Winnipeg and moving the United States office to Fresno and that recommendation thereto be brought back to the 1981 convention.

**Carried**

1981 (43-44)

**Motion:**

1. That we retain the practice of having two national offices for the administration of our Missions/Services program;

2. That we de-emphasize the specific geographic location that these offices must be in, thus removing this consideration from constituency bias;

3. That we allow BOMAS to determine the specific location of these offices based upon efficiency of function and financial consideration.

Accepted with suggested changes in wording.
1984 (71-72)

1. We recommend that Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services establish fraternal relations with the Mennonite Brethren Churches in Angola to the end of encouraging them and assisting them in expanding their Christian witness in Angola.

M/s/c

2. We recommend that Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services, under their own auspices, seek to evangelize and serve in Pakistan with the purpose and hope of establishing Mennonite Brethren Churches.

M/s/c

3. We recommend that Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services begin mission activity in Portugal, evangelizing and serving with the purpose and hope of establishing Mennonite Brethren Churches.

The motion carried with a number of opposing votes.

1990 (85-88)

1. That the General Conference affirm the actions of Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services in accepting Vision for the Future: Goals for the 1990s as a working document and guideline for the 1990s.

M/s/c

2. That the General Conference approve the expansion of MBM/S ministry in Asia by entering one new country in 1993.

Rationale

(1) In our Vision for the Future, the following statement sums up the intent. “Seeking to enter one or two new countries where we do not presently work by: (a) Research and study of the potential and needs in a region in cooperation with our regional Mennonite Brethren partners, giving priority to the challenge of Asia; (b) Preparation of an appropriate strategy for the country chosen and the formation of an international team; (c) Seeking to enter one new country in 1993.” In keeping with this statement, Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services is researching new ministry opportunities in countries in Asia such as Thailand, Sri Lanka, Vietnam and other unreached people groups.
(2) More than half the world’s people live in Asia. They constitute the largest bloc of unevangelized peoples in the world.

(3) Only a small percentage of MB Missions/Services missionaries presently serve in Asia (15 out of 131). Our missionary force in Asia has been decreasing because of visa difficulties in countries such as India and Indonesia. In thinking of needs in Asia, one is mindful that the largest bloc of unevangelized are the Muslims. We have just recently begun an evangelistic and church planting ministry in Karachi. Our team, presently consisting of three missionaries, will expand to five by early 1991. We believe we need to get a better grasp of methods and strategies in reaching Muslims before we make any major expansion in this area.

(4) Another large bloc of unevangelized peoples are the Buddhists—particularly in southeast Asia. We are making investigations in Thailand and are keeping a sharp eye on possibilities in the other Buddhist countries in that region.

M/s/c

3. That the MB Missions/Services mandate be expanded to a global mandate and that, while its primary focus be reaching people for Christ overseas, it also now includes groups in North America. It is understood that in implementing this mandate in North America, MBM/S will work in conjunction with regional agencies, such as national, district or provincial church extension boards.

Rationale

(1) Mission, by definition is the crossing of frontiers and so is applicable in North America as well as overseas.

(2) People from overseas are increasingly present within our own geographic borders. We are particularly interested in those who come from countries which are restrictive on missionary entrance.

(3) This expanded mandate represents a response to heightened interest in the pluralism of current North American society and requests from within the church constituency for Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services involvement in “cross-cultural” evangelism in North America.

M/s/c

4. That in keeping with the understanding of global missions, MB Mission/Services engage in a ministry of evangelistic outreach to international students in North America, in cooperation with Mennonite Brethren agencies.
Rationale
(1) International students continue to come in large numbers to North American educational institutions for advanced training.
(2) Both the pursuit of education and their being thrust into a new cultural and social environment make them open to new ideas and values.
(3) International students frequently return to leading positions in their home countries.
(4) There are many Mennonite Brethren teachers and students on campuses who have opportunity to relate to international students.
(5) There are a significant number of Mennonite Brethren churches in urban centers and in close proximity to university campuses.
(6) Many Mennonite Brethren members have the gift of hospitality and personal friendship.

M/s/c to amend as follows: Add “and institutions” at end of recommendation.

M/s/c the amended motion.

5. That in keeping with the understanding of global missions, MB Missions/Services engage in a ministry of evangelistic outreach to recent immigrant groups in North America, in cooperation with Mennonite Brethren agencies.

Rationale
(1) The recent influx of immigrants has resulted in concentrations of people groups seeking to retain their specific identity.
(2) Many of the new immigrants retain their links to their relatives and friends in their home countries thereby potentially providing an evangelistic network.
(3) Many immigrant groups live in proximity of Mennonite Brethren churches.
(4) Many Mennonite Brethren have an immigrant background themselves enabling them to identify more readily with the experience of recent immigrants.

M/s/c

1993 (93-104)

1. Lithuania

That the General Conference approve the expansion of MBM/S ministry in Europe by making a long-term commitment to work in the country of Lithuania in the following way:
(1) Our involvement to be coordinated with LOGOS involvement, as per our partnership agreement, and to be reviewed within three years according to the normal pattern of MBM/S country reviews.

(2) MBM/S to be open to involvement in all three of our traditional program emphases, i.e., evangelism and church planting, training and discipleship, and social ministries.

(3) MBM/S to accept the invitation of the Lithuanian Christian Charities Fund (LCCF) to enter Lithuania under their umbrella rather than to attempt to establish a separate MBM/S presence and identity at this time; this decision to be reviewed within three years.

(4) MBM/S to give priority to a cooperative ministry at this time in the establishing of congregations. Though the congregations may not take the Mennonite Brethren name, MBM/S personnel will demonstrate a strong and clear commitment to MB theology and the MB Confession of Faith.

(5) MBM/S involvement initially to consist of:
   (a) one couple to serve in an administrative capacity for one more year (93-94) at Lithuania Christian College (LCC).
   (b) one couple to serve in a chaplaincy/Bible teaching function at LCC, this assignment to be reviewed prior to the assignment for a second term.
   (c) couples to serve in a pastoral role in Panevezys specifically and other locations where LCCF has emerging congregations as personnel and funds allow.

(6) The support and benefits package for workers to be adjusted to reflect the Lithuanian economic situation.

**Rationale**

(1) With the independence of the Baltic states followed by the collapse of the former Soviet Union, Lithuania has a tremendous thirst for things Western and especially the English language. Given that thirst, there will be many different Western influences. It is important that the gospel of Jesus Christ is shared in this country of 3.6 million people at this time. Although there are some other Western agencies entering Lithuania, their numbers are considerably less than in Russia and other sectors of the former USSR.

(2) While it is estimated that only 3,000 people in Lithuania are evangelical believers, there is demonstrated openness to the gospel. The Lithuanian Christian Charity Fund (LCCF) is experiencing significant responses to evangelistic ventures, including baptisms and the formation of new congregations which are distinct from traditional religions such as the Catholicism and Lutheranism. LCC is experiencing an openness to the gospel,
as evidenced by non-Christians attending voluntary college chapels and informal conversations about spiritual issues.

(3) Working with the LCCF is at this point a good option for MBM/S entry into Lithuania. LCCF’s leader, Otonas Balciunas, has personal integrity and is open to such a relationship. The involvement of MBM/S would help improve the accountability structures and institutional strength of the LCCF.

(4) Although the LCC at this point is clearly a foreign institution which may or may not become indigenous to Lithuania, the college has a very positive witness. Its provision of English language instruction is addressing a felt need and serves as a bridge for providing biblical instruction and spiritual counsel.

(5) There is considerable enthusiasm in our North American constituency for current MBM/S involvement in Lithuania. If this move to long-term ministry is confirmed, it should not be difficult to recruit personnel and raise financial support for this new program. The proposed budget for Lithuania in 1993-94 is $54,730.

Paragraph 4 of the recommendation was changed to read as follows:

“MBM/S to give priority to cooperative ministry at this time in the establishing of congregations. Though the congregations may not take the Mennonite Brethren name, MBM/S personnel will demonstrate a strong and clear commitment to MB theology and the MB Confession of Faith.”

Paragraph 5 of the recommendation was changed to read as follows:

“MBM/S involvement initially to consist of:
(a) personnel to serve in an administrative capacity for one more year (93-94) at Lithuania Christian College (LCC).
(b) personnel to serve in a chaplaincy/Bible teaching function at LCC, this assignment to be reviewed prior to the assignment for a second term.
(c) personnel to serve in a pastoral role in Panevezys specifically and other locations where LCCF has emerging congregations as personnel and funds allow.

M/s/c

2. That the General Conference ratify the action of the MBM/S Board approving entry into Venezuela for long-term ministry with the following approach:
(1) To cooperate with the already established Chinese and Spanish-speaking MB churches in Venezuela for a ministry of evangelism, church planting, leadership training and social ministries.

(2) To encourage fraternal relationships between the Chinese-speaking and Spanish-speaking MB churches, thus moving toward a common Mennonite Brethren identity in Venezuela.

(3) To provide MBM/S missionaries for work in partnership with the Chinese-speaking and Spanish-speaking MB churches ion Venezuela;

(4) With regard to the Chinese work:
   (a) to acknowledge with appreciation the past support of the Pacific Grace MB Church of Vancouver and their expressed willingness to continue support; and
   (b) to encourage the participation of other Chinese MB Churches with the hope of developing a stronger support base from which to reach out to Chinese communities in other parts of Latin America.

**Rationale (95-96)**

(1) The work in Venezuela was begun with resources from two local Mennonite Brethren churches in North America: Parlier, CA (Spanish) and Pacific Grace, Vancouver, BC (Chinese). Since the three resulting churches in Venezuela continue to require some outside assistance, it seemed appropriate for MBM/S to assume a coordinating role.

(2) The strong base of support in North America for this ministry is an important factor for building a strong ministry in Venezuela. The proposed budget for Venezuela work in 1993-94 is $57,372.

(3) Venezuela’s population of about 21 million has less than 3% evangelical Christians. However, the people seem both open and responsive to the gospel, as demonstrated by the growth of these works in just four years.

(4) The presence of a major Chinese community in Venezuela, perhaps the third largest in Latin America, provides us with a unique opportunity for open evangelism and church planting among Chinese. The flow of Chinese immigrants into the country, as well as departures for North America, is an ongoing phenomenon.

M/s/c

**1995 (28-57)**

**1. Church Planting in Thailand: (45)**

The Board of MBM/S recommends that the Conference affirm the board decision of Sept.29, 1994, to commit to a 15-year church-planting program
among the Khmu people, based in Thailand, with outreach to Laos and southeast Asia is a holistic ministry; with reassessment every five years.

Rationale

Fulfilling a 1990 conference decision to increase mission in Asia, MBM/S missionaries Russell and Elizabeth Schmidt began service in Thailand in 1992, with the assignment of exploring and researching potential opportunities for church planting among the Buddhist population. Their research eventually focused on the Khmu, an unreached people group among whom the Schmidts had previously worked in Fresno for seven years. After language study, they conducted a pilot outreach project in a Khmu region at Tha Wang Pha, in northeastern Thailand, near the border of Laos. There are 20,000 Khmu in Thailand and 400,000 in neighboring Laos.

In a year and a half the Schmidts have seen numerous conversions to Christ. A number of villages desire to build churches. Local believers and a missionary with Far Eastern Broadcasting Company have joined in spreading the Word and edifying the faithful. Pastor Phone Keo, of the Fresno Khmu congregation, visited and ministered with much response in both late 1993 and a year later.

In summer 1994, independent evaluation by Reg Reimer, director of leadership development for World Evangelical Fellowship, affirmed the pilot project as successful and indicative of much church-planting potential. The report also praised the Schmidts for their excellent strategy and efforts. The board also received encouraging news from the Japan MB Conference that a Japanese couple had begun preparing for mission among the Khmu.

Upon reviewing the outside evaluation, reports by the Schmidts and the evidence of Japan MB readiness to contribute to a mission team, the board voted to place an international church planting team in the area, with the Schmidts as team leaders. Candidates Fritz and Susi Peters have been appointed to begin in the fall 1995. A full three-couple team seems probable in the not-too-distant future.

The board also recognized that churches which form will adhere to establish cooperative protocol of working under the Evangelical Fellowship of Thailand, in affiliation with the Associated Churches of Thailand. Though not bearing the MB name, they will embody Anabaptist beliefs, theology, identity and principles of community. (p.45-46)

M/s/c

2. Biennial Budget

The Board of MBM/S recommends that the budget for 1995/96 be set at $4.85 million; that the budget for the 1995-97 biennium be set at $9.8 million.
**Rationale**

In the early 1990s, MBM/S budgets aimed for as much as $5.6 million, a goal that did not materialize. Income at one point did reach $5.2 million, but did not remain at that level. The need to downsize or “right-size” became urgent.

Though necessary, this reduction came at a time of exploding opportunity in the former USSR and new concern for the unreached peoples of Asia. Remembering our mandate to seize the day and share the light:

- MBM/S has sought to emphasize these growing priorities amid deepening budget cuts.
- We have also initiated church-planting projects in other pockets of the unreached in Venezuela, Peru, Uruguay and Burkina Faso.
- Personnel numbers in Latin America and Zaire have diminished accordingly.
- All workers took a 3 percent cut in pay.

Last year’s budget of $4.6 million appears to have successfully brought finances into healthy balance. Many churches and individuals have increased their commitment and involvement in global mission to new levels. Our missionaries have received much affirmation and appreciation in their ministries with home churches. Direct mail, Adoption options, more focused constituency ministries, regional seminars and Pastors Overseas Program have heightened mission interest and awareness.

The board favors a budget that builds realistically for growth rather than calls workers home from overseas service. The recommended budget will enable MBM/S to expand in a few strategic areas, especially Thailand and Lithuania. It will provide a 5 percent salary increase to compensate for a 3 percent cut in 1994/95.

**Strategy for the CIS**

Theological Education-Priority #1 (54)

Theological education shall be the number one priority for MBM/S in the CIS, and St. Petersburg Christian University [SPCU] be the primary, though not necessarily the only, institution that we seek to help.

1. MBM/S will commit itself to a long-term involvement at SPCU with up to two faculty couples/units.
2. MBM/S will send short-term specialists to SPCU, especially for the masters program.

3. MBM/S will investigate ways to assist SPCU in the strengthening of their board and administration, e.g., by offering to have representation on the SPCU board, by providing short-term administrative staff/advisors and/or support staff.

4. MBM/S will be prepared to channel special project funds to SPCU for the construction of permanent facilities, without a commitment to fund-raising for that purpose.

5. Other Bible schools, colleges, etc., can be given assistance if there are good reasons to do so, and if we have adequate resources.

6. Estimated eventual cost-$80,000 to $100,000 per annum.

Rationale
(1) The strategic importance of SPCU
(2) historic and spiritual connections
(3) The fragility of the school
(4) The need for MBM/S to focus its energies.

Support for Indigenous Missionaries-Priority #2 (55)

Support for indigenous missionaries (evangelists, church planters, teachers) becomes priority number two in the MBM/S strategy for the CIS.

1. The amount of money allocated to this emphasis must demonstrate that this is the number two priority, e.g., begin with $15,000 to $25,000 for this purpose, including the $8,000 in the 95/96 budget for the support of LOGOS workers.

2. MBM/S will begin adding this indigenous component by supporting national workers in Kyrgyzstan through the Ray of Hope Mission.

3. Staff will discern in discussion with Logos Germany and Ray of Hope Mission the most appropriate channel for the sending of such supportive funds.

4. MBM/S will continue to represent further opportunities for strengthening evangelism and church planting in CIS Central Asian and other republics by
funding indigenous mission workers, including the possibility of planting MB churches.

**Rationale**

(1) Aside from MBM/S, there is extensive external interest in Western Russia and the Ukraine;
(2) Central Asia is a needy area;
(3) Central Asia has a large Muslim population which MBM/S has identified as a priority;
(4) MBM/S has natural linkages with Bishkek;
(5) MBM/S needs to focus its efforts.

**Other priority involvements in the CIS are to include the following:**

1. Possible Participation in a Mennonite Centre in Moscow

   The MBM/S long-term strategy for the CIS is to include possible participation with other Mennonite agencies in a Mennonite Centre in Moscow.

   (1) Staff will be given the mandate to explore the concept of a joint Mennonite Centre with other Mennonite mission and service agencies participating in the FSU Working Group of the Council of International Ministries.

   (2) A proposal for funding and staffing shall be brought back to the board for the Spring 1996 board meetings.

   (3) Initial projections suggest that the functions of such a centre might include the following:
   - to provide a drop-in-centre for seekers of all kinds in Moscow and beyond, including remaining Mennonites;
   - to provide a resource center for the distribution of information through literature, books, etc.;
   - to explore mission/service potential within the CIS on behalf of sponsoring agencies;
   - to seek to connect with Mennonite remnant groups (e.g., Omsk churches) and to find ways to minister pastorally to them insofar as they are open to such ministry;
   - to nurture relationships with the church in the CIS, especially Evangelical Christian Baptists.

   (4) The assumption behind this proposal is that each of the agencies will pursue its own mission and service mandate but that there is also common agenda such as the above which, in the interests of stewardship and cooperation, are best pursued together.
(5) Estimated cost about $10,000 per annum.

2. Involvement in Lay Training

MBM/S makes a commitment to involvement in lay training in the CIS and, to begin with, explore the potential of providing support to Christian Camping International/Russia [CCI/R] in the development and operation of a Leadership Training Institute Centre [LTIC] at Anapa, under the following premises and to the extent described below.

(1) CCI/R is the Russian affiliate of Kingdom Ventures International [KVI]. KVI may be the lead agency that operates LTIC; other evangelical agencies may also become contributing partners/supporters.

(2) MBM/S commits itself to provide the following support for a period of three years assuming the program will begin in the fall of 1996.

- MBM/S will provide payroll services for North American KVI staff abroad. Presently MBM/S provides that service for four workers. This could easily increase to six or more.

- MBM/S will help qualified North American staff, such as the Director of LTIC but KVI makes the final decision about staff appointments.

- If requested, MBM/S will consider sending/supporting North American lead staff for LTIC, for example under the Vocational Missionary or Retiree Volunteer Program.

- MBM/S will provide financial support for students and Russian faculty. MBM/S should consider a financial contribution to this project totaling $10-20,000 per year.

(3) After two years of operation the involvement of MBM/S will be reviewed before a further commitment is made beyond the initial three years.

(4) Estimated cost is $15,000 to $25,000 per annum.

M/s/c to approve the strategy statement

1997 (38-56)

That the Conference affirm the board decision of September 28, 1996 to adopt the document “Global Mission Guidelines: Vision, Priorities, and Strategies for Century 21” and thus support it as the official global mission policy of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.

M/s/c
Resolution concerning Religious Freedom in Russia (52-53)

[Editorial Note: The following resolution was presented by the moderator.]

Be it resolved that the 416 delegates assembled in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada for the 61st convention of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches in Canada and the United States solemnly request on this 12th day of July 1997, that political leaders in Canada and the United States utilize their personal and diplomatic influence to prevent a dramatic loss of religious freedom in Russia.

In particular, we strongly urge our political leaders to convey to President Yeltsin and other Russian authorities, representatives and ambassadors the view that the proposal which would deny legal status to all religious organizations with less than 15 years of registered status, should not be enacted into legislation.

We strongly urge our political leaders to commend President Yeltsin and the Russian government for the great progress which has been made in providing religious freedom and other basic democratic rights but also to urge President Yeltsin and the Russian government not to adopt fundamentally anti-democratic measures which violate Russia’s constitutional guarantees, which contradict Russia’s international treaty obligations, and which reverse Russia’s impressive progress in establishing democracy, a climate of freedom, and respect for human dignity.

This resolution shall be forwarded to:

Prime Minister Jean Chretien
Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy
Leader of the Opposition Preston Manning;
Other Members of Parliament
President Bill Clinton
Secretary of State Madeline Albright
Majority Leader Newt Gingrich
Senator Trent Lott
other Senators and Congressmen
Representatives of the Media
Ambassadors from Russia.

M/s/c
1999 (580)
That the Conference affirm the convergence of MBMS International and Youth Mission International programs under the MBMS International Board, effective no later than September 1, 1999.

Rationale
The convergence was first recommended by the Conference Restructuring Task Force in their 1998 final report. Both the Canadian Board of Evangelism and Mission USA, our current partners in YMI, have since affirmed this move. The convergence will be a natural fit due to our common purpose in global mission. It has the potential to increase mission interest in our common constituency; provide greater efficiency in decision making; and provide significant growth in a joint program. The YMI leadership team has also affirmed the convergence, and has worked with MBMS International staff to process structural issues and build stronger ties between the two agencies.
M/s/c
5. BOARD OF REFERENCE AND COUNSEL (After 1990, Board of Faith and Life)


- Bible

1978

Interpretation of Scriptures (12-15)

Our interest in the crucial contemporary issue of Biblical interpretation (hermeneutics) is to permit God through His Spirit to speak clearly and powerfully to us in our present situation. Our concern is to grasp the message of the Bible so that we might grasp the living God to the fullness of His self-revelation. Biblical authority, therefore, is fundamental to our understanding of God, His redemptive purpose in Christ and our task and mission in the world. Because our God is a speaking God, His revelation is both prepositional and personal.

We regard the Bible’s affirmations about itself as determinative for our understanding of the origin and nature of the Scriptures (e.g. II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:21). To accept Christ as Lord is to accept the Old Testament Scriptures as God’s word as He did, and to acknowledge the New Testament as His word. As the inspired Word of God the Bible is the infallible and inerrant rule of faith and life for us and for all mankind. This principle of Biblical authority (Sola Scriptura) is to control our hermeneutics! We commit ourselves to the following principles of interpretation.

1. The interpreter must seek to understand the original author’s intent.

   Because God revealed Himself in history to men with varied personalities rooted in different cultures, a proper interpretation of the Scriptures requires a thorough going grammatico-historical exegesis.

   Our understanding of the cultural context therefore, is helpful—the language and concepts of the day, the literature and literary forms. Biblical writers did not abstract themselves from their culture. Paul quotes pagan authors (e.g. Acts 17:28); Jude refers to contemporary religious writings. One must not presuppose that they merely echo these writings; they use or transform them for their own purposes. Therefore, a study of extra-Biblical
writings may throw some light on certain Biblical words, expressions, or references.

However, while we want to discover all we can of the Biblical background to help us understand the Biblical author’s intention, we assert the primacy of the Biblical text. The Bible is its own best interpreter. We believe in the clarity (perspicuity) of the Scriptures and that every believer can understand and respond to its message. Therefore, painstaking Biblical studies and meditation should go together.

This means, for example, that we ought not to bring to the Bible a pre-understanding of man’s need based on current philosophical, psychological or sociological perspectives—in order to understand the Gospel message in that perspective. Our understanding of man, for example, and his need before God is to be derived from the Scriptures and be under the Scriptures’ control, and in that light we understand the wonderful redemption wrought by God in our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. The Old and the New Testament need to be seen as an organic unity.

Because all Scriptures are inspired of God, we look for and expect harmony in all of its parts. There is rich diversity and a complementarity, without contradictions.

However, Biblical harmony must not be confused with mechanical or wooden conformity. We need to recognize and search for the distinctive emphases of the various Biblical writers. For example, the Gospel authors organized similar events in different chronological order or selected aspects of the same events for different purposes. All agree on the central aspects of the accounts, but each at times approaches the event with a different interest.

Because of the rich diversity in the Scriptures, it is understandable that in interpreting Biblical teaching on some doctrines, such as eschatology, we may arrive at variant conclusions on details. This arises out of our own imperfect understanding of the Scriptures, as well as out of the fact that “the perfect” has not yet come: “Now we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, that which is in part will pass away” (I Corinthians 13:9). Nevertheless, we should diligently pursue our Biblical studies guided by the principle that the more evident and plain assertions of Scriptures help us understand the more difficult, more symbolic and problematic portions.

3. The interpretation of the Scriptures needs to take account of revelation as progressive.

God’s redemptive acts are a chain of events spanning thousands of years culminating in the incarnation, depth and resurrection of our Lord and the accompanying interpretation of the New Testament.
From the Old Testament to the New there is evident an expansion of God’s self-revelation, a development of His redemptive plans, and an increasing clarity of His purposes. Within the Old Testament the prophets and psalms provide a further understanding of God’s will than the Pentateuch; the New Testament goes beyond the Old. There are promises and fulfillment; types and anti-types; shadows and reality. Both Testaments find a central focus and finality in Christ. This Christo-centricity is to guide our interpretation of the whole Scriptures, even as our Lord taught us (Luke 24:44 ff).

Old Testament texts or events are referred to in the New Testament in continuity with their significance in the Old, but also with an expanded meaning not readily apparent in the earlier context.

4. Interpretation of the Scriptures and response to them requires the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit through whom the Scriptures came gives illumination to the mind and heart of man enabling him to understand them; “Now we have received, not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things fully given us by God…but a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them” (I Corinthians 2:12-14). It is the Spirit of God who authenticates the Word in our hearts; “for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction” (I Thessalonians 1:5). Of particular significance is the need to seek the help of the Spirit in order to apply rightly the Word of God to the life situation we are in: “…that you may be filled with the Knowledge of His well in all spiritual wisdom and understanding so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord” (Colossians 1:9-10).

5. Interpretation of the Scriptures needs to be done with a right attitude within the believing community.

The Bible encourages us to hunger intensively after the Word (I Peter 2). Seeking the face of God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, meditating on the Word of God, seeking Him in prayer, responding in obedience to His voice—all are basic attitudes we need to cultivate in our personal and corporate lives. Insights into God’s Word and the right application of it to our lives are not apart from spiritual struggle in His presence (Psalm 1; I Peter 2; Psalm 27; II Tim. 3:15-17).

The Bible also underscores the interdependence of the members of the body of Christ. We are to contribute to each others’ growth to maturity (Ephesians 4). This calls for an interest in the understanding of Scriptures God has given to other members of the body of Christ—those who in past history
have served him faithfully, and those who today love Him and seek to bring every thought captive to Christ. Within the Priesthood of believers we acknowledge the words of the Scriptures: “And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as pastors and teachers for the equipping of the saints…” (Ephesians 4:11, 12) We may, therefore, speak of the validity of a “congregational hermeneutics.”

Accepted

1987

Resolution on Inerrancy (65-66)

Preamble:

In 1978, at the General Conference convention in Buhler, an extensive statement on the inspiration, interpretation and authority of the Scriptures was adopted. Since then questions have been asked repeatedly about how this statement relates to the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy. At the 1984 conference in Reedley, the Chicago Statement (without its preamble) was circulated, but no consensus was reached on what to do with it. The Board of Reference and Counsel was then asked to take the question under advisement and to come to the next conference with a resolution on this matter. The following resolution attempts to re-affirm the high view of biblical inspiration and authority, which is part of our Mennonite Brethren heritage. However, it also cautions us against making human definitions of inspiration the test of orthodoxy.

Resolution:

The Preface to our Mennonite Brethren Confession of Faith states unequivocally that we hold to the “Holy Scriptures as the infallible guide for faith (i.e. doctrine) and practice (i.e. ethics)” (p.7). “The Mennonite Brethren Church has throughout its history emphasized biblical authority in all matters of faith and practice” (p.9). For 127 years the Mennonite Brethren Church has held firmly to the Holy Scriptures as the inspired and authoritative Word of God. Although our lives have not always conformed to the teachings of the Bible, we have always confessed that the Bible is the ultimate authority of what we believe and what we do. We have not always agreed in our interpretation of some of the passages in the Bible, but we have been united on the cardinal doctrines of the Bible, as these are set out in our Confession of Faith. We should, therefore, be profoundly and humbly grateful that God has kept out churches and our conference from divisions over the question of biblical authority. It would be a great pity if we should now, in an attempt to define more precisely what “inspiration” means, sow discord in our churches.
We recognize that the efforts that are made from time to time, to
describe the interplay of the human and divine factors in the revelation of God,
given to us in the Scriptures, arise out of a genuine concern for the spiritual
welfare of the church. Such definitions, however, are human attempts to
describe what will always remain, partially at least, a mystery.

The rallying cry of the Fundamentalists of a generation ago was
“verbal inspiration.” In the literature of the twenties, when the conflict
between fundamentalism and liberalism was sharp, one does not find the word
“inerrancy,” nor does one find it in the Confessions of faith or in the doctrinal
statements of Christian schools.

Today the language is “inerrancy,” and the expression “verbal
inspiration” or “plenary inspiration” is seldom heard. Whereas, for most
evangelicals these expressions-plenary inspiration, verbal inspiration,
infallibility and inerrancy—are synonymous, we should remind ourselves that
the catchword of one generation is not necessarily that of the next. The crucial
test of orthodoxy should not be sought in current slogans, but rather in a
constant concern to bring our life and our teaching into conformity with the
Word of God.

How, then, shall we respond to the Chicago Statement on Biblical
Inerrancy? First of all, we should take seriously what the framers of this
statement say in the Preface: (1) “The authority of Scripture is a key issue for
the Christian Church in this and every age.” (2) “We acknowledge the
limitations of a document prepared in a brief intensive conference and do not
propose that this statement be given creedal weight.” (3) “We gladly
acknowledge that many who deny the inerrancy of Scripture do not display the
consequences of this denial in the rest of their belief and behavior, as we are
conscious that we who confess this doctrine often deny it in life by failing to
bring our thoughts and deeds, our traditions and habits, into true subjection to
the divine Word.” (4) “We claim no personal infallibility for the witness we
bear, and for any help which enables us to strengthen this testimony to God’s
Word we shall be grateful.” Also, it should be pointed out that the scholars
who formulated the Chicago Statement acknowledge (Article VII) that the
mode of inspiration remains largely a mystery to us.

The Board of Reference and Counsel therefore, recommends to our
conference (1) that we reaffirm our statement on Scripture in our Confession
of Faith: “We believe that all Scripture is inspired by God as men of God were
moved by the Holy Spirit. We accept the Old and New Testament as the
infallible Word of God and the authoritative Guide for the faith and life of
Christian discipleship” (p.11ff.). (2) That we identify with those who confess
the inerrancy of the original documents of the biblical books. (3) That we
accept the 19 articles of the Chicago Statement as a serious and valuable
attempt to describe what it means to confess that the Bible is our ultimate
authority in faith and life. (4) That we recognize that the Chicago Statement is one of many attempts that have been made in the past to define what it means to confess that the Bible is the Word of God, with the strengths and weaknesses that always characterize such statements. (5) That we do not, however, make the Chicago Statement a part of our Confession of Faith. (6) That we recognize that the precision of any person’s definition of revelation and inspiration (including our own) is not necessarily an index of his or her spiritual depth or faithfulness to God and his Word. (7) That our entire denomination commit itself anew to humble obedience to the Word of God and to the faithful proclamation of “the whole counsel of God.” (44-46).

M/s/c

- Confession of Faith (43-44)

1987

It has been said of our Confession of Faith that it is “descriptive rather than prescriptive.” This statement does not explicitly appear in our Confession of Faith, although the Preface does counsel us to regard all creedal statements and confession of faith to be more “descriptive than normative.” The meaning and intent of such counsel may have been understood in 1978, but to many present day readers it is ambiguous and open to private interpretation.

In context, this statement reads as follows: “The Mennonite Brethren church has throughout its history emphasized biblical authority in all matters of faith and practice. This emphasis exalts the centrality of Scripture and counsels a proper use of creedal statements and confessions of faith as expressions of our understanding of Scripture. Such documents are to be regarded as descriptive more than normative. They are never to be given equal status with the Bible.”

Reading the statement in context does help us to understand the intent of the word “descriptive” but does not clarify for us the intended meaning of the word “normative.” Our Confession of Faith, in being descriptive, affirms a high view of biblical authority. Final authority rests in the Scriptures. Our Confession of Faith represents our corporate understanding of the message and intent of the Scriptures. It is not as authoritative as the Scriptures, but is authoritative to the extent that it is biblical. Because it is “descriptive,” it is also not a closed statement of faith, but open to periodic review and revision.

The Introduction to our Confession of Faith strongly implies that it is also prescriptive and normative for our congregations. “It constitutes a commitment, a covenant of brotherhood…” It is to be considered as normative for membership, instruction, ministry and Scriptural discipline.
“Departure from the Confession of Faith constitutes a serious violation of the
covental relationship of the brotherhood and hence may require the
withdrawal of fellowship form individuals and churches guilty of such
violation.” Although descriptive, it does not give liberties to individuals and
churches to disregard or teach doctrines that are not in agreement with our
Confession of Faith. In this sense it is both prescriptive and normative for our
churches.

In the process of review and revision, however, the Scriptures and not
our Confession of Faith is normative. We practice a corporate hemeutic
which listens to the concerns of individuals and churches, but discerns together
the meaning and intent of the Scriptures. This safeguards our denomination
form the extremes of individualism and private interpretations, but allows for
free study and discussion. In this process, the Scriptures, not an existing
Confession of Faith, are normative. The product of this process, however,
becomes prescriptive and normative for our conference and its churches.

Moved to refer the motion back to Board for revision and brought
back later at this convention.

M/s/c

Revised Resolution on Confession of Faith (68-69)

It has been said of our Confession of Faith that it is “descriptive
rather than prescriptive.” This statement does not explicitly appear in our
Confession of Faith, although the Preface does counsel us to regard all creedal
statements and confession of faith to be more “descriptive than normative.”
The meaning and intent of such counsel may have been understood in 1978,
but to many present day readers it is ambiguous and open to private
interpretation.

In context, this statement reads as follows: “The Mennonite Brethren
church has throughout its history emphasized biblical authority in all matters
of faith and practice. This emphasis exalts the centrality of Scripture and
counsels a proper use of creedal statements and confessions of faith as
expressions of our understanding of Scripture. Such documents are to be
regarded as descriptive more than normative. They are never to be given equal
status with the Bible.”

Reading the statement in context does help us to understand the intent
of the word “descriptive” but does not clarify for us the intended meaning of
the word “normative.” Our Confession of Faith, in being descriptive, affirms
a high view of biblical authority. Final authority rests in the Scriptures. Our
Confession of Faith represents our corporate understanding of the message and
intent of the Scriptures, but is authoritative to the extent that it is biblical.
Because it is “descriptive,” it is also not a closed statement of faith, but open to periodic review and revision.

The Introduction to our Confession of Faith strongly implies that it is also prescriptive and normative for our congregations. “It constitutes a commitment, a covenant of brotherhood…” “Departure from the Confession of Faith constitutes a serious violation of the covenental relationship of the brotherhood and hence may require the withdrawal of fellowship from individuals and churches guilty of such violation.” It does not give liberties to individuals and churches to disregard or teach doctrines that are not in agreement with our Confession of Faith. In this sense it is binding for our churches.

In the process of review and revision, however, the Scriptures and not our Confession of Faith is normative. We practice a corporate hermeneutic which listens to the concerns of individuals and churches, but discerns together the meaning and intent of the Scriptures. This safeguards our denomination from the extremes of individualism and private interpretations, but allows for free study and discussion. In this process, the Scriptures, not an existing Confession of Faith, are normative. The product of this process is binding for all churches. Pastors, teachers and conference officers are expected to affirm and teach the Confession of Faith. (p .68-69).

M/s the adoption of the revised Resolution on Confession of Faith.
Vote was taken by ballot (69).
The resolution passed by a 59% vote of 300-209

Notice of Motion--Confession of Faith

Preamble

In view of the Resolution on the Confession of Faith, and in light of the significance of a common confession in our conference, the Board of Reference and Counsel submits the following recommendations:

Recommendations

1. That the first and last paragraphs of the Preface of the Confession of Faith be deleted and that the following be inserted as the last paragraph of the Preface, “Since the Confession of Faith represents our best understanding of what God’s Word teaches, we consider it normative for the life and teaching of the church.”

2. That all pastors and teachers in the church be expected to affirm and teach the Confession of Faith as normative.
3. That a BORAC initiated study process of the Confession of Faith, over the next triennium, in two study conferences be authorized.

M/s/c

BORAC withdrew the above Notice of Motion and presented the following resolution:

Resolved that we commit ourselves to work toward the unity of the Conference, and that we mandate BORAC to develop unity strategies that will forge confessional consensus and Conference unity.

M/s/c

1990

1. Proposed revision of Article XV, Confession of Faith: (106-110)

Current: We believe that Christians should live by the law of love and practice the forgiveness of enemies as taught and exemplified by the Lord Jesus. The church, as the body of Christ, is a fellowship of redeemed, separated people, controlled by redemptive love. Its evangelistic responsibility is to present Christ, the Prince of Peace, as the answer to human need, enmity and violence. The evil, brutal and inhuman nature of war stands in contradiction to the new nature of the Christian. The Christian seeks to practice Christ’s law of love in all relationships, and in all situations, including those involving personal injustice, social upheaval and international tension. We believe that it is not God’s will that Christians take up arms in military service but that, where possible, they perform alternative service to reduce strife, alleviate suffering and bear witness to the love of Christ.

Proposed: We believe that God in Christ reconciles people to himself and to one another, making peace through the cross. We believe the church is a fellowship of redeemed people living by love. Christians seek to be agents of reconciliation in all relationships, to practice love of enemies as taught by Christ, to be peacemakers in all situations, e.g., personal injustice, social upheaval and international tension. We view violence in all forms, e.g., abortion, abuse, rape, war, as contradictions to the new nature of the Christian. We believe that the evil and inhuman nature of such actions are contrary to the gospel of love and peace. We believe Christians are called to perform alternative service rather than to participate in war. Alleviating suffering, reducing strife, and promoting justice are ways of demonstrating the love of Christ.
M/s/c to approve Article XV
M/s/c to reconsider the motion regarding Article XV
M/s/c to refer this issue to BORAC (Board of Faith and Life)

Revised Article XV (114-115)

We believe that God in Christ reconciles people to himself and to one another, making peace through the cross. We believe the church is a fellowship of redeemed people living by love. We seek to be agents of reconciliation in all relationships, to practice love of enemies as taught by Christ, to be peacemakers in all situations. We view violence in all forms, as contradictions to the new nature of the Christian. We believe that the evil and inhuman nature of such actions are contrary to the gospel of love and peace. In times of national conscription of war, we believe we are called to give alternative service where possible. Our bond with other followers of Jesus transcends all racial, social, and national barriers. Alleviating suffering, reducing strife, and promoting justice are ways of demonstrating Christ’s love.

M/s to amend “In times of…we believe many are called….”
Defeated by hand vote.
M/s to alter the reading to include a footnote defining violence as “destructive, deliberate violence.”
Motion defeated by hand vote.

Question called for vote by ballot. 90.5% in favor (337-yes, 35-no).

1993

[Editorial Note: For preamble to this Recommendation see pp. 16-17.]

1. That the Board of Faith and Life be authorized to initiate a rewrite of the Confession of Faith in a manner consistent with the terms of reference outlined below. (16-18)

Terms of Reference (for the proposed rewriting of the Confession of Faith)

The Board of Faith and Life proposes that the Confession of Faith be rewritten, as per the following outline:
CURRENT ARTICLES
1. God
   Father
   Son
   Spirit
2. Revelation of God
3. Humanity and Sin
4. Salvation and Grace
5. The Christian Life
6. The Church of Christ
   Organization, Christian
   Nurture/Discipline
7. The Mission of the Church
8. The Christian Ministries
9. Christian Baptism
10. The Lord’s Supper
11. Marriage and Christian Home
12. The Lord’s Day and Work
13. Christian Integrity
14. The State
15. Love and Nonresistance
16. Christ’s Final Triumph

PROPOSED CHANGES [*]
1. God
   Father
   Son
   Spirit
2. Revelation of God
3. Humanity and Creation
4. Evil and Sin
5. Salvation
6. Nature of Church
7. Baptism
8. Lord’s Supper
9. Mission of the Church
10. Other Faiths** [1]
11. The Christian Life
12. Marriage and Family
13. The Lord’s Day
15. Love and Nonresistance
16. Stewardship** [3]
17. Sanctity of Life** [4]
18. Christ’s Final Return

*The Confession of Faith and the commentary on the Confession should
address confessional issues (biblical-theological teachings and issues), not
polity questions. The polity issues can be addressed in the pastoral
implications section.

**New Articles
[1] Address the question of Jesus as the only way to salvation in relation to the
other major religions.
[2] Incorporate the traditional confession re. the state into a larger statement
about the relationship of the church and society.

Proposed Format
The Board of Faith and Life proposes the following format for the Confession:
1. The Confession itself with articles about the length of the revised articles IX, X and XV.
2. A commentary on each article that will provide the main Scriptures for the confessional stance and the main interpretive understandings behind the article. See Exhibit A (distributed in Convention Packet) for a sample commentary on baptism.
3. A pastoral application that addresses the main questions pastors and church leaders face in relationship to the confessional stance. See Exhibit B (distributed in Convention Packet) for a sample pastoral application on baptism.
4. An abbreviated and popular version of the Confession that can be used by churches and agencies of the church for the general public.
5. A liturgical version of the Confession for use in public worship.

M/s/c

2. Article IX

That the following revision of Article IX, “Christian Baptism,” in the 1976 General Conference Confession of Faith be accepted.

[Editorial Note: For Preamble see p. 20]

Current:

We believe that Christians should obey their Lord’s command to be baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. To qualify for baptism, one must repent of sin and trust in Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord. We practice water baptism of the believer by immersion.

Baptism symbolizes death to sin and resurrection to the new life in Christ and the receipt of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is a public commitment to discipleship. At baptism the believer enters into the full membership and work of the church. Local congregations may receive into fellowship those who have been baptized by another mode on their confession of faith.


Proposed: (20-22)

Confession

We believe that when people receive God’s gifts of salvation, they are to be baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Baptism is a sign of having been cleansed from sin. It is a covenant with the church to walk in the
way of Christ through the power of the Spirit.

Meaning
Baptism by water is a public sign that a person has repented of sins, received forgiveness of sins, died with Christ to sin, been raised to newness of life and received the Holy Spirit. Baptism is a sign of the believer’s incorporation into the body of Christ as expressed in the local church. Baptism is also a pledge to serve Christ according to the gifts given to each person.

Eligibility
Baptism is for those who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and commit themselves to follow Christ in obedience as members of the local church. Baptism is for those who understand its meaning, are able to be accountable to Christ and the church, and voluntarily request it on the basis of their faith response to Jesus Christ.

Practice
We practice water baptism by immersion administered by the local church. Local congregations may receive into membership those who have been baptized by another mode on their confession of faith. Persons who claim baptism as infants and wish to become members of a Mennonite Brethren congregation are to receive baptism on their confession of faith. Matthew 3:13-17; 28:18-20; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:2-6; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Colossians 2:12-13; Galatians 3:26-27; Ephesians 4:4-6.

M/s/c to accept the recommendation with a 94% majority (430-in favor, 27-against).

3. Article X
That the following revision of Article X, “The Lord’s Supper,” in the 1976 General Conference Confession of Faith be accepted.

Current
Members of the church observe the Lord’s Supper as instituted by Christ. The elements, the bread and the fruit of the vine, symbolize Christ’s broken body and shed blood. They remind us of His suffering and death for our salvation and our unity in Him.

In preparation for the fellowship of the Lord’s Supper, every believer should examine himself and partake of the elements in a worthy manner. Those who have peace with God, live in peace with their fellowmen and have been baptized are invited to partake of the Lord’s Supper, thereby testifying to His death until He comes.
The Lord’s Supper expresses the fellowship and unity of believers with Christ. It is a supper of remembrance, celebration and praise which strengthens believers for true discipleship and service.


**Proposed Meaning**

The church observes the Lord’s Supper, as instituted by Christ. The Supper points to Christ, whose body was broken for us and whose blood was shed to assure salvation for believers and to establish the new covenant.

In the Supper the church identifies with the life of Christ given for the redemption of humanity and proclaims the Lord’s death until He comes. The Supper expresses the fellowship and unity of the all believers with Christ. It is a supper of remembrance, celebration and praise which strengthens believers for true discipleship and service.

**Practice**

In preparation for the fellowship of the Lord’s Supper, all believers examine themselves. All those who understand its meaning, confess Jesus Christ as Lord in word and life, are accountable to their congregation and are living in right relationship with God and others are invited to participate in the Lord’s Supper. (The normal pattern in the New Testament was that baptism preceded participation in the Lord’s Supper.)


M/s/c to accept the recommendation with a 91.5% majority (421 in favor, 39 against).

1995

**Article VI: Nature of the Church (23-25)**

**Called by God**

We believe the church is the people called by God through Jesus Christ. People who respond in faith to salvation through Jesus are incorporated into the local church by baptism. Members of the church commit themselves to follow Christ in a life of discipleship. God empowers the church by the Holy Spirit to carry out its mission.

**Body of Christ**

We believe the church is the body of Christ. God established this new community to proclaim the reign of God and to be a living foretaste of God’s redeeming rule on earth. The church is one body of believing men and
women from every nation, race, and class. The head of this body is Christ. The church is called to make Christ visible in its worship, ministry, witness, and mutual love and care.

**Worship**

We believe the church is nourished and renewed as God’s people gather regularly for worship. The worshipping community celebrates God’s faithfulness and grace, reaffirms its faithfulness to God, builds up the members of the body, and seeks God’s will for its life and mission. The church observes baptism and the Lord’s Supper to proclaim the good news of salvation.

*Footnote: One form of the church’s worship is the practice of footwashing which can be a meaningful reminder of the humility, loving service, and personal cleansing that is to characterize the relationship of members within the church.*

**Accountability**

We believe that the church is a covenant community in which members are mutually accountable in matters of faith and life. They love, care, and pray for each other, share each other’s joys and burdens, and admonish and correct one another. They share material resources as there is need.

The church is responsible to discipline members who fall into sin, and to forgive and restore those who repent.

**Gifts for Ministry**

We believe the Holy Spirit gives gifts for ministry to each member, as God wills. These gifts are to be exercised for the building up of the church.

God gives leadership gifts to some people to enable, empower, and order the diversity of gifts for ministry. The common life of the church is dependent on mature leaders who model Christ-likeness in their personal, family, and church life. The church is to discern such leaders prayerfully, and to affirm, support, and correct them in a spirit of love.

**Organization**

We believe the church exists as local bodies of believers, and as a worldwide community of faith. Local congregations are to follow the example of the NT church in seeking the counsel of the wider church on matters that affect its common witness and mission. Congregations are called to work together in a spirit of love, mutual submission, and interdependence.
Article IX: Mission of the Church

The Great Commission
We believe the gospel is the good news of God’s salvation in Jesus Christ for all people. Christ commissions the church to make disciples of all persons and nations by calling them to repentance, and by baptizing and teaching them to obey all that he commanded.

The Great Commandment
Jesus teaches that disciples are to love God and neighbor. Believers are to witness to God’s reign and salvation by telling the good news and by acts of love and compassion.

The Witness
We believe that every Christian is empowered to be a witness to God’s salvation. The church as a body is a witness to the reign of God in the world. By its life the church is a city on a hill, a light to the nations, an alternate society that reveals the purposes of God to the world.

M/s/c to accept the documents and return them to BFL for further revision and processing with provincial/district Boards of Faith and Life (25, 27). Following further revision and processing the two articles will be published in the next publication of the Confession of Faith.

1997

Processing the Revised Confession (29-30)

Step 1: Present the draft copy of the revised Confession of Faith to the Waterloo ’97 convention delegation.
Step 2: Circulate the Revised Confession of Faith workbook to all congregations. All member congregations of General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches will be asked to process the material and send workbook back to BFL not later than February 15, 1998.
Step 3: The Task Force will collate all substantive comments and present them to the Board of Faith and Life at the April, 1998 meetings.
Step 4: A leadership convocation be called for October 29-31, 1998, to give final shape to the Confession of Faith.
Step 5: Final approval and ratification of the Confession of Faith be sought at the 1999 convention of General Conference Mennonite Brethren Churches.
M/s/c to approve the suggested process for study, revision and approval of the Confession of Faith. Motion carried by voice vote with a few dissenting voices

1999

Confession of Faith

Article 1: God (46)
Change the headings from “God as…” to “God the…”
Approved by consensus.

Motion to delete the reference to mother, father, husband in the opening paragraph.
M/s/ Defeated. The original wording is retained

Motion to add the words “the Counselor” under the heading “God the Holy Spirit” so that the sentence reads, “The Holy Spirit, the Counselor, is the creative power . . .”
M/s/c.

Article 2: Revelation of God (46)
Change heading “The Bible as the Word of God” to “The Bible as the Written Word of God.”
Approved by consensus

Article 4: Sin and Evil (46-47)
Motion to change “our natural propensity to sin” to “our human sinfulness,” in the first paragraph.
M/s/c to change the wording as recommended.

Motion to change to “Sin is a power that enslaves humanity. Satan, the adversary seeks…”
M/s/c to change the wording as recommended

Article 5: Salvation (33)
Approved by consensus to add 1 Cor. 1:18 to references

In the last paragraph, second sentence, add the word “people” after “all”.

58
Approved by consensus.

Add after the phrase “they are saved by grace,” the words “through faith,” and add a reference to Hebrews 11:6. 

Approved by consensus (47).

Article 9: Lord’s Supper (60)
M/s/c to move the footnote, which reads “The normal pattern in the New Testament was that baptism preceded participation in the Lord’s Supper,” on Article 9 into the text

Article 10: Discipleship (47)
In the last paragraph, add the words “are to” so that it reads, “Disciples are to resist worldly values…,” and replace “illicit” with “immoral.”

Approved by consensus

Article 11: Marriage, Singleness and Family (59)
Under the heading “Singleness” replace “choose it as a way of life” with “those who are single.”

Approved by consensus

Article 12: Society and State (59)
M/s to change the phrase “state-sanctioned violence” to “state-sanctioned authority.”

Motion defeated.

Suggest changing the phrasing in the last paragraph from “Believers do not participate in secret societies which demand the swearing of oaths and conflict” to “the swearing of oaths or which otherwise conflict.”

Approved by consensus

Article 16: The Lord’s Day, Work and Rest (36, 59)
Under “The Lord’s Day,” add the word “prayer” to the list of activities. “On the Lord’s day, believers joyfully devote themselves to worship, instruction in the Word, prayer, breaking of bread…”

Approved by consensus

Article 17: Christianity and other Faiths (59-60)
Change “promise” to “assurance” on last line of first paragraph.

Approved by consensus.
Change “can” to “may” in the line, “While elements of truth can be found.” **Approved** by consensus.

M/s to delete the lines “The eternal destiny of those who have never heard the gospel is in God’s hands” and “The Judge of all the earth will do what is just.” **Defeated** to delete the lines as presented

M/s/c to accept the revised Confession of Faith.

**Approved** by consensus the affirmation of the digest and sidewalk version subject to revision at the September 1999 meeting of BFL

2002

Name Change

Memorandum of Understanding: The title of the Confession of Faith will be changed from “Confession of Faith of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches” to “Confession of Faith of the United States and Canadian Conferences of the Mennonite Brethren Churches (19).

- Divorce and Remarriage

1981

Ministry of the Divorced and Remarried (48)

We believe that the Scriptures teach the permanence of marriage and that divorce and remarriage are violations of God’s will. However, we recognize that people often fail to live according to God’s will, and marriage relationships are broken, often resulting in divorce and remarriage.

We also believe that God’s Word teaches that where humans sin, that sin can be forgiven by God whenever there is repentance. We acknowledge that the intention of God in redemption is to extend forgiveness even for divorce and remarriage. We resolve therefore:

That we proclaim with conviction that the will of God for marriage is permanence. And, that we extend the forgiving grace of God to those who have experienced divorce and remarriage. And, further, that without relenting at all on our commitment to the sanctity of marriage we offer forgiveness and the opportunity for ministries without implying approval of the wrong that has been committed.

We encourage the local congregation involved to treat each situation individually to discern the attitude, the gifts and the quality of Christian character of the divorced and remarried.
We commit ourselves to instruct the divorced and remarried to recognize the seriousness of their offense against God and the community; that they allow the community of believers sufficient time to accept their repentance; that they consider service a privilege rather than a right; and, that they voluntarily step aside for a period of time and allow the church to determine readiness for service (1 Timothy, Titus 1).

We reaffirm the resolution adopted at our 1969 conference at Vancouver, i.e., “The services such members can render in a church will largely be determined by what the membership is ready to receive from them. However, we believe that a member who has been divorced, or divorced and remarried should not be eligible to serve on the deaconate or in the ministry” (1969 Yearbook p.16).

The scripture references in paragraph 5 were explained as being 1 Timothy 3:2, “An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach.” And Titus 1:6, “If any man be above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion.”

M/s. A ballot vote was requested.
Carried (335-129).

- Gifts, Spiritual
1981

Gift of Tongues (56-57)

We are grateful to God that there has been a renewed emphasis on spiritual gifts in the Christian church. Also, we gladly acknowledge that God in his grace continues to revitalize the life of his people by giving them a new awareness of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in their lives. And since the Spirit, like the wind, blows where it wills (John 3:8, “The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is every one who is born of the Spirit.”), we must allow for diversity in the way people experience God in their Christian life.

We hold that the believer needs the gifts of grace to serve the Lord effectively, and that the church cannot fulfill its mission unless God empowers it by his Spirit and enables it by spiritual charisms.

Since God calls his people to different kinds of services, we recognize that he does not bestow the same gifts on all. This kind of diversity in the Body of Christ should not lead to dissension but to the enrichment of the church and the strengthening of its ministry. While this has been generally
accepted in our brotherhood, there is still considerable dispute on the gift of tongues.

We believe with Paul that God gives his gifts “to each one individually as he wills” (1 Cor. 12:11, “But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.”). Therefore, if it pleases God to give the gift of tongues to some of our brothers and sisters, so that they may be enriched in their communion with God, we can only be thankful. It does not follow, of course, that everyone who claims to have this gift has received it from the Spirit, since glossolalia is known also in non-Christian religions. The test of authentic Christian experience, according to 1 Cor. 12:1-2 (“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware. You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to the dumb idols, however you were led.”), lies in the believer’s confession of Christ’s lordship in his life.

We do not, however, understand the Scriptures to teach that tongues (or any other gift) is an indication of greater spirituality, or that it is proper for those who have this gift to exercise it in public where it is not understood and easily leads to division within the congregation. Christian love should dictate that what does not edify the congregation should not have a place in public worship.

Moreover, those who have the gift of tongues should not insist that others also try to get this gift, for Paul teaches clearly that this gift is not for everyone (1 Cor. 12:30, “All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?”). We need to remind ourselves, also, that the fruits of the Spirit (particularly love) are a clearer manifestation of Christian maturity than the possession of certain gifts.

Quite apart from the question of spiritual gifts, all of us need to seek God’s face daily for the renewal of our spiritual life through repentance, prayer and obedience to God’s Word, so that he might fill us with the Spirit both to live a life well-pleasing in his sight and to serve him effectively in those tasks to which he calls us.

The fourth line of the fifth paragraph was amended to read, “in public, when it is not interpreted.”
M/s/c amended motion.

- Homosexuality

1981

Homosexuality: (53-55)

The view that the Bible condemns homosexuality as sinful is being re-evaluated in many quarters today. New interpretations coming to us from
certain Christian scholars assert that homosexuality is simply a natural variation in human sexuality and a legitimate alternate lifestyle when it occurs in the context of a loving and committed relationship. Interpretations are being put upon biblical texts so that they no longer prohibit homosexuality.

In light of these new interpretations, it is incumbent upon us to articulate what we believe the Bible teaches regarding homosexuality. Thus we affirm

   a. Sodom’s sin (Gen. 19:4-11, cf. Jude 7 among others) was homosexuality and not primarily inhospitality. The prohibition and condemnation of Leviticus 18:20 (“and you shall not have intercourse with your neighbor’s wife, to be defiled with her.”) and 20:13 (“If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death. Their blood-guiltiness is upon them.”) is directed toward the sin of homosexuality and not idolatry. The evil of homosexuality is also illustrated in the intention of the Gibeonites (Judg. 19:22-30).
   b. Romans 1:26,27 (“For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned their natural function of the woman and burned in their desire towards one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.”) condemns homosexuality and lesbianism as dishonorable and unnatural. Interpretations which state Paul is only condemning lust and promiscuity (and not engaging in homosexuality per se) or that Paul is only condemning heterosexually oriented people for engaging in homosexual acts (which for them are unnatural) are foreign to this text.
   c. 1 Corinthians 6:9,10 (“Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunks, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”) and 1 Timothy 1:10 (“and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching.”) list vices which exclude people from the kingdom of God, vices which are against both the Old Testament law and the gospel. These lists clearly condemn homosexual acts.
2. Homosexuality is a violation of the creation order (Genesis 1:27, “And God created man in His own image, in the image if God He created him; male and female He created them.”; Genesis 1:31, “And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.”; cf. Matthew 19:4, “And He answered and said, “Have you not read, that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female.”). Adam’s masculinity and Eve’s femininity was not a result of chance but was a part of the Creator’s divine plan. Sexual differentiation is the basis for man and woman becoming “one flesh.” Not merely heterosexuality but monogamous marriage is the divine norm for man. Homosexual activity cannot be viewed simply as an alternate lifestyle.

3. Homosexuality, however, is not an unpardonable sin. Paul explains that some of his Corinthian converts, who had been homosexuals, were washed, sanctified and justified “in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:11, “And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.”). To receive forgiveness, however, the homosexual must repent, leaving behind any justification or practice of his sin.

4. Homosexuals who have repented should be welcomed as members of the church. Sinners saved by grace have no option but to receive forgiven sinners into fellowship without distinction and without contempt. The new convert will need special help and care to be established in holiness and fortified for times of temptation. Failure to live up to the biblical norms of morality will call for the discipline of the church which expects the converted homosexual to live a chaste life, just as it expects people with strong heterosexual drives to live chastely, whether they are married or not.

In item #2, the word “man” at the end of the second last line was corrected to read “mankind.” Line 1 of the preamble of the resolution was amended to read “The view that the Bible condemns homosexuality, which includes lesbianism, as sinful is being reevaluated in many quarters today.” Moved that the second sentence of the resolution, “New interpretations…committed relationship,” be deleted.

Carried.

Moved that the resolution be adopted with the amendments as noted.
Carried.
Preamble

Our present Worship Hymnal has served us well for 16 years, since its publication in 1971 (150,000 copies printed). The previous Canadian Hymnal (1960) and USA Hymnal (1953) served these two constituencies for less than 20 years. In order to prepare for the next revision which is being increasingly requested, a 6-9 year process is envisioned to assess our needs, to review what we presently have and use, and to select appropriate hymns and worship aids for the years ahead. We recognize the crucial role the hymnal plays in our corporate worship in influencing and expressing our faith and life.

Recommendation:
That the conference authorize BORAC and BCL, in concert, to appoint a Hymnal Revision Committee to work on revising our hymnal to be completed by the mid-1990s. BCL shall be responsible to manage the revision process. The final edition shall be approved by BORAC.

M/s/c

1990

Hymnbook Revision (35-36)

1. That we delay aggressive implementation of producing a hymnal until the next convention in 1993.

2. That we assign the Hymnal Commission the ongoing responsibility of updating and adding to the Sing Alleluia collection and of making available to churches the copyright regulation information for overhead use and about using other resources.

3. That we recognize the significant role of hymnody in teaching and promoting right theology and Mennonite Brethren distinctives among us that other generic songbooks do not emphasize.

4. That we commit ourselves to the interests of our youth to begin a long-term plan that deals with the need to revise our hymnbook on a 20-25 year cycle.
5. That we open a Hymnbook Production account with our General Conference Board of Trustees and encourage the giving of funds to this account by our constituency.

M/s/c

1993

Hymnal (55-56)

That a worship hymnal be produced by the Board of Faith and Life. The contents of the hymnal are to be compiled by the Hymnal Commission and reviewed by the Board of Faith and Life. Marketing decisions are to be determined by BFL.

BFL shall proceed with production and printing provided that:

1. Hard data potential for sales justifies publication,
2. The price of the hymnal will be comparable to the lower median cost of currently produced hymnals (the range is $10-14), and
3. The hymnal budget will allow for the Hymnal Commission to finish its work in order to have the hymnal ready for printing. This will require an additional $27,000 to be included in the budget. Through a fundraising drive which has just been started $5000 has been donated already. More funds are expected to come in for this purpose, the amount required for the budget now is $22,000.

M/s/c (88% in favor, 12% against).

- Pastoral Ministry

1978

Pastoral Ministry: (10-12)

A resolution was presented. Since the resolution was not accepted it was not recorded.

Alternate Motion: That in view of the discussion, we should refer the paper back to the Board of Reference and Counsel for study and the presentation of a new resolution. Accepted.
Revised Motion:

Though we recognize that all believers are called to ministry, some are called to special services such as pastor. A call to the pastorate is a call to excellent and rewarding work. It is a call to leadership modeled after the shepherding ministry of Christ.

The local church needs to recognize its responsibility in the calling, strengthening, and relocation of pastors. The pastor’s effectiveness in ministry is just as much the responsibility of the church as the church’s well-being is the responsibility of the pastor. Generous opportunities need to be provided by the congregation for young men who may be prospective pastors to minister in non-threatening situations so that gifts can be discovered and refined.

When a church calls a pastor, attention needs to be given to his understanding of the Mennonite Brethren heritage, functioning of the denominational family, and brotherhood loyalties. To insure perseverance and avoid casualties in the pastoral ministry, an evaluative process needs to be adopted by the church and pastor to insure an early and non-threatening warning system through which frequent indications of the pastor’s effectiveness are constructively shared. The effectiveness of pastoral ministry should be improved through sharing of work with those having appropriate gifts in team ministry. When pastoral changes are made, care should be exercised in making such transitions without damage or loss of respect to either pastor or congregation.

Causes of pastors leaving the ministry vary and rest with both congregation and pastor. These are often related to unreasonable expectations. Therefore we wish to affirm the following in the spirit of Galatians 6:6: “Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.”

1. We reaffirm that God has given gifts to the church which need to be discovered, developed, and applied. Broad involvement in ministry is essential so that many can experience the satisfaction and personal growth that comes from rendering meaningful service and so that the local church strengthens its own reservoir of human resource.

2. We recognize that premature termination of ministry is caused by a combination of factors. Congregations and their leaders need to sense areas in which the pastor and his family will be in need of extra support and understanding and respond accordingly.

3. We urge congregations to provide the necessary time and means for the pastor and his wife to be involved in study leaves and opportunities for personal and professional growth.
4. Communication between congregation and pastor requires an ongoing evaluation of a pastor’s ministry as well as that of the entire church so that the termination of the pastor’s term of service is not a hurtful and destructive experience. Whatever procedure is adopted, to come to that point must not degenerate to an exercise in manipulation or dishonesty. Procedures need to be such that a confidence vote, if used, is only an affirmation of what pastor and congregation already know.

Accepted.

1981

Ordination (5-13)

I. Preamble

Over the years considerable diversity in the practice of ordinations has arisen in our district, provincial and national conferences. Not only is there diversity in ordination procedure, but there is also some confusion about the meaning and the practice of ordination as such. The Board of Reference and Counsel, therefore, studying this matter at some length, would like to propose that we move to more uniform ordination procedures.

We believe that the “laying on of hands” for ministry is a biblical practice. It’s an act of corporate identification that communicates the blessing of God and his people upon the candidate. It’s a personalized “marking out” of the person for the benediction of God for a ministry. In the Bible it is always associated with prayer and involves the setting apart of people for specific services. We do not hold that the “laying on of hands” is a sacrament by which people are given a special gift or position, but an act by which they are authorized to serve in the church’s name (Acts 6, 13; 1 Tim. 3; 2 Tim. 1). The “laying on of hands” as an affirmation for ministry, should be done by the church’s leaders in the name of the church.

We believe that pastors, Bible teachers, evangelists, missionaries, deacons and others who are asked to serve in some specific ministry in the name of the church should be “marked out” and affirmed by the “laying on of hands.” The Board of Reference and Counsel would strongly urge our churches to identify those whom God has given gifts for various ministries and to encourage such persons to develop these gifts and to put them into the service of God, and to affirm such persons by the “laying on of hands.” Where such persons are married, the church should make sure that both marriage partners share in the call to ministry and support one another.

We believe that since the New Testament Church practiced the “laying on of hands” for a variety of purposes, our practice might reflect this
diversity. For this reason we as a conference have in the past distinguished between ordination, commissioning and licensing. Whereas these terms may not be found in the New Testament, we have found them useful in distinguishing some of the ministries for which church members may be “marked out” by the “laying on of hands.”

We would, therefore, recommend that our M.B. Conference affirm people for ministry in the following ways:

1. **Ordination.** Ordination by the “laying on of hands” is the act of the local church and the Conference of affirming those called by God for the ministry of the gospel. Normally ordination calls for a lifelong commitment as long as health and strength permit. Ordination calls for an examination of the candidate by local church and a district or provincial Board of Reference and Counsel (or its equivalent). The person to be ordained shall subscribe to the M.B. Confession of Faith. Where a brother is to be ordained to the gospel ministry, his wife should share with him his commitment to that calling. Husband and wife should both be present at the examination and at the service of ordination. We strongly recommend that all churches follow the procedure outlines later in this document.

2. **Commissioning.** Commissioning by the “laying on of hands” is the act of the local church by which a person is “marked out” and affirmed by the congregation for a specific service for a period of time. Those commissioned by the church shall subscribe to the M.B. Confession of Faith.

3. **Licensing.** Licensing is the act of a local church by which it authorizes a leader in the church to perform functions for which state approval is required. It is understood that ordinarily such persons would be either commissioned or ordained. Such persons should also subscribe to the M.B. Confession of Faith.

In order that the M.B. Conference remain unified and that the pastoral/teaching ministry be held in high regard:

1. Those seeking ordination, or recognition of ordination by another denomination, shall be baptized by immersion, since that is the form of baptism practiced by the M.B. Church.

2. Those seeking ordination or recognition of ordination, shall not have been divorced, unless the divorce occurred in his pre-Christian state.
3. Those seeking ordination or recognition of ordination, shall be men. (Note: Requirements “1” and “2” are also applicable to the commissioning and licensing for the pastoral ministry.)

Those who are ordained to the ministry of the gospel should manifest a spirit of servanthood and not be lords over the church. The church, on the other hand, should respect their leaders, encourage and support them as those who have been called of God to teach and to guide the church and to watch over the souls of its members.

II. Ordination Procedures

1. Initiation of the ordination procedure:
   a. The local church may initiate the request of ordination for a ministerial candidate. The church council guides this procedure and requests the candidate to share his calling with the local church. It is necessary that the local church affirm this calling.
   b. A person sensing the call to the ministry may initiate the ordination procedure by sharing his calling and conviction with the church counsel and with the local church. It is necessary that the local church affirm the calling of the candidate.
   c. Missionary boards or agencies may request the ordination or commissioning of prospective workers.

2. Evaluation and examination of the candidate for ordination:
   a. When a local church has affirmed a person for ordination, the district or provincial Board of Reference of Counsel (or its equivalent) is notified. This board (or committee) then provides the candidate with an “ordination questionnaire” to be completed and made available to its members and to the local church pastor.
   b. The district or provincial committee examines the prepared questionnaire and conducts a personal interview with the candidate and his spouse. In this meeting the candidate’s views and positions regarding doctrinal views, the M.B. Confession of Faith and attitudes toward ministry and to conference loyalty are ascertained.
   c. When the district or provincial committee has examined the candidate and recommended ordination, the local church is notified and may then proceed with plans for the ordination service. The local church should not proceed with ordinations before the district or provincial committee has duly examined and recommended the candidate for ordination.
3. The Ordination Service

a. The ordination service is planned and conducted by the local church.

b. Representation and participation by the appropriate conference committee at the service are highly recommended and identify the candidate as a conference minister.

c. The ordination service includes charges to the candidate and the local church, the laying on of hands, prayer of dedication to the ministry, and a response by the candidate. The spouse should always accompany the candidate for ordination in these procedures.

d. It is advisable to invite neighboring M.B. churches to the ordination service.

e. The person have been duly ordained should receive from the district or provincial committee a certificate of ordination. (*further suggestions may be found in the M.B. Ministerial Manual, Ch. IV.)

4. Recognition of ordination of workers coming to us from another denomination

a. Such a person shall follow the same procedure for ordination as do candidates from our own conference: (1) completion of the doctrinal questionnaire, and (2) examination by the district or provincial committee.

b. The local church shall conduct a “recognition of ordination service.” The former ordination shall be recognized without the laying on of hands. Representation from the conference at such a service is advisable.

III. Ordination Questionnaire

Instructions: This questionnaire is for completion by candidates for ordination to the ministry in the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches. It is assumed that the candidate is familiar with the Confession of Faith of the Mennonite Brethren Churches and with the Constitution of the conference.

Please give your own convictions and views on all questions. The guide has been designed for brief answers. Some questions can be answered by a simple “yes” or “no.” A more lengthy answer is desirable where you are asked to express your views more fully.
**Spiritual Life**
A. Give a testimony of your conversion experience, and your experiences in the life of the church.
B. What are you doing to see that others come to know Jesus Christ?
C. Relate your “call to the ministry.”
D. Discuss your views of Christian discipleship.
E. How do you nurture your own spiritual life?

**Doctrinal**
A. Doctrine of the Scriptures.
   1. Do you accept the Bible as the final authority in all questions regarding faith and practice?
   2. Discuss briefly your views on the Scripture with reference to “inspiration” and “revelation.”
B. Doctrine of God. Provide a resume of your views regarding:
   1. The nature of God.
   2. God in creation.
   3. God in redemption.
C. Doctrine of Christ. Discuss briefly:
   1. His incarnations.
   2. His death and resurrection.
   3. His present lordship and final triumph.
D. Doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Discuss the Holy Spirit in terms of:
   1. His part in the Trinity.
   2. His work in relation to the unbeliever.
   3. His work in the life of the believer.
   4. The place of the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit in the church.
E. Doctrine of man and sin. Explain your view regarding:
   1. The state and the condition of the first man created by God.
   2. The nature of the fall of man and the consequences of that fall.
   3. The meaning of original sin.
   4. The meaning of sin in relationship to God.
   5. The penalty of sin.
F. Doctrine of salvation. Write briefly on:
   1. The meaning of redemption.
   2. The relationship of justification to sanctification.
   3. God’s grace and human responsibility.
G. Doctrine of the church. Explain your view regarding:
   1. The nature and mission of the church.
   2. The significance of the local church.
   3. The church ordinances.
   4. Church membership.

H. Doctrine of love and nonresistance. Give your view of biblical nonresistance.

I. Doctrine of Spirit-beings. Define:
   1. Angels.
   2. Satan and the occult.

J. Doctrine of last things. Write briefly on:
   1. The second coming of Christ.
   2. Resurrection and judgment.
   3. The eternal state.

K. Social and spiritual issues. Give your view of:
   1. Marriage of believers with nonbelievers.
   2. Divorce and remarriage.
   3. “Charismatic” movement.
   4. Observance of the Lord’s Day.
   5. Swearing of the oath, and secret orders.
   7. Abortion.

**Church polity**

A. What is your view of the functional structure of the local church?
B. What is a pastor’s role in the local church?
C. How do you visualize the implementation of a ministry of evangelism and social action through the local church?
D. What is the meaning of brotherhood and covenant community?
E. What is the role of women in the church?
F. What is the relationship of the local church to the conference?

**Denomination relationship**

A. Are you in full agreement with the Confession of Faith of the conference of Mennonite Brethren churches?
B. Are you willing to work within the framework of the Constitutions of the conference of the Mennonite Brethren churches (district, provincial, national and general)?
C. Are you willing to give active support to the program of the conference of Mennonite Brethren churches and to serve in a brotherly manner with your fellow workers?

An editorial change was suggested as follows: In points 2 and 3 of the preamble, the wording is to be changed from “SHOULD subscribe to the M.B. Confession of Faith”: to “SHALL subscribe…” This change was adopted by consensus.

Motion to Amend
Although we celebrate God’s call to service to all His children, we realize that we have traditionally excluded some people from ordination and that many of our people are strongly committed to one or more of these exclusions. We also realize that we do not agree on how to interpret or apply the Scriptural passages that we have used to justify these exclusions. But in order that the M.B. Conference remain unified and that the pastoral/teaching ministry be held in high regard:

1. Those seeking ordination, or recognition of ordination by another denomination, shall be baptized by immersion, since that is the form of baptism practiced by the M.B. Church.
2. Those seeking ordination, or recognition of ordination, shall not have been divorced, unless the divorce occurred in his pre-Christian state.
3. Those seeking ordination or recognition of ordination, shall be men. (Note: Requirements “1” and “2” are also applicable to the commissioning and licensing for the pastoral ministry.
This amendment was defeated.

Moved to accept point 1 of the preamble. A vote by ballot was requested; but because of a concern for unity in our decision, the actual voting was tabled until a later session of the Conference.

M/s/c to accept the resolution on ordination, with the exception of points 1, 2 and 3 of the preamble.
M/s/c that 1, 2 and 3 of the ordination resolution preamble be lifted from the table and re-opened for discussion.
Moved that we adopt items 2 and 3 of the preamble. Motion carried.

It was agreed, by consensus, that the last sentence of the preamble be amended to read simply, “in order that the M.B. Conference remain unified,” deleting the rest of the sentence.
M/s/c that item 1 of the preamble be referred back to the churches via BORAC for further discussion and presentation to the Conference at a later date.

**Church/Pastor Relations (13-14)**

We believe that good church/pastor relations are based on the concept of the priesthood of all believers. All members of the body have free access to God and are called to minister according to the gifts given to them. God has gifted some members to be leaders to equip the church for growth and ministry. Some leaders are gifted for the pastoral ministry. Whenever factors prevent or hinder the proper functioning of each member in the body, relationships are affected adversely.

We acknowledge that our congregations frequently experience tensions between the pastoral leadership and the members. We believe that the deterioration or breakdown of relations can be avoided or resolved.

**Therefore:**

We affirm that a greater manifestation of love would do much to maintain good church/pastor relations. We appeal to the pastor to demonstrate a servant spirit in all matters of church life.

We encourage a stronger emphasis on multiple (plural) leadership and congregational government. We discourage a pastoral system that places too much leadership responsibility upon one man or upon a team of employed personnel.

We urge our congregations to work much more diligently at discerning potential pastors in their midst and at assisting them in the development of their gifts in preparation for ministry within the congregation.

We encourage congregations to undertake a study of pastoral leadership to help them understand the biblical model and function of the pastor.

We believe that pastoral evaluation should be an ongoing process. This evaluation should be made on the basis of a mutually approved approach or method. The decision for continuation or termination of the service of the pastor should come out of a process of discernment rather than simply by a vote of confidence. The leadership should exercise greater influence and give clearer directives when criticism and personal attacks are made on the pastor. The injunction to “speak the truth in love” should be obeyed when tensions need to be resolved.

Motion to amend the 4th paragraph of the 2nd column on page 10 [p. 13 in Yearbook] as follows:
We urge our congregations to pray the Lord of the harvest to call and send workers into the pastoral ministry, and to work much more diligently.

Carried.

1984

Baptism/Ordination of Pastors (111-112, 132)

A. Background

1. At the 1981 conference at St. Catharines, Ont., the Resolution on Ordination was adopted, except for the one item in the preamble which read as follows: “Those seeking ordination, or recognition of ordination by another denomination, shall be baptized by immersion, since that is the form of baptism practiced by the MB Church” (See 1981 Yearbook pp. 5-13). This item was referred back to the churches for further discussion and presentation to the conference at a later date.

2. The process adopted by the Board of Reference and Counsel, to study this question, was to ask church councils and/or congregations to view this question from both a theological and polity point of view. Upon completing this procedure they were to record their position with the Board of Reference and Counsel. Additional comments were also invited.

3. Many congregations have taken this matter very seriously, involving detailed processing and decision making. Of the 147 responses, 89 congregations favor the resolution, 41 disagreed with the resolution, and 17 were not able to come to a clear consensus.

4. It is impossible to report all of the 83 additional qualifying statements that were submitted with the above responses. But they can be grouped into four major concerns, i.e.:
   a) Are we not advocating a double standard when we insist upon rebaptism of non-immersed members for ordination, but not for memberships?
   b) Are we justified in asking that persons who have already testified to personal faith in Christ by another mode of baptism be immersed in order to comply with a polity position rather that because of theological convictions?
   c) Can we remain consistent with our teaching if we do not immerse those who will be teaching and practicing baptism by immersion?
d) Is the essence of baptism “mode” conformity or uniformity in symbolic significance?

**B. Recommendation**
That the Mennonite Brethren Conference affirm baptism by immersion as a pre-requisite to ordination, recognition of ordination and licensing for pastoral ministry in Mennonite Brethren churches.

**C. Rationale**
1. Such a position is in keeping with our Confession of Faith.
2. The results of the study of this question by the congregations do not express consensus. This becomes significant when we take into account that about 120 churches did not respond. In view of this we should continue our practice as given in the 1981 resolution.
3. This position will insure the acceptance of all our ordained pastors in all Mennonite Brethren churches.
4. We agree that a case can be made from a theological point of view that immersion is not the essence of baptism; but the willingness of our ordained leaders to comply with the polity of the conference leads us to affirm our historical position.

M/s/c that the baptism/ordination recommendation be referred back to the Board of Reference and Counsel. Some opposing votes.

Statement of Board of Reference and Counsel concerning referral of the resolution on Baptism of Ministers:

The Board of Reference and Counsel has received and reviewed the referred motion regarding the baptism of ordained ministers. It does not have the time at this Convention to work through the issues in such a way as to offer further leadership. Therefore, the Board of Reference and Counsel will study the issue during the interim, in consultation with a wide range of church leaders. In the meantime, we ask the churches of the Conference to abide with the existing Conference resolution.

M/s/c. Some dissenting votes were registered.

1987

**Orientation Program for Integrating Pastors (48-49, 74)**

Preamble
BORAC recognizes the need to integrate more effectively those pastors and associate pastors who come to the Mennonite Brethren conference from non-MB faith traditions and institutions. At issue are common understandings of theology, polity and institutional conference loyalty. BORAC, therefore, presents the following as steps to implement a program of integration and orientation for the General conference.

**Recommendations**

1. That the General Conference develop a program for the orientation of senior and associate pastoral appointees whose pastoral preparation has not been in Mennonite Brethren schools.

2. That the General Conference ask the seminary to assume responsibility for developing an orientation program in consultation with BORAC.

3. That all new pastors and associates, appointed in the last two years, whose pastoral preparation has not been in Mennonite Brethren schools be asked to participate in a 2 ½ day orientation, January 24-26, 1988, at the MB Biblical Seminary.

4. That all pastors and associate pastors who assume a pastorate after January 1, 1988, whose pastoral preparation has not been in Mennonite Brethren schools be asked to participate in one orientation program during January at the MB Biblical Seminary.

5. That the General Conference offer to subsidize the local church where assistance is needed. The subsidy will not exceed one half of the total costs.

M/s/c

**Baptism by Immersion as a Requirement for Ordination to Pastoral Leadership (47-48, 73)**

In 1963 our conference opened the door to full church membership for those who had been baptized upon confession of faith in Jesus Christ by some mode other than immersion in water. However, such members were not to be transferred by letter from one local church to another. Local churches were, in fact, given freedom to deny full membership to non-immersed applicants.

In 1972 our conference took one step further and allowed non-immersed members, who had been accepted into the full membership of local churches, to transfer freely by letter from one church to another.

In 1981 this practice was re-affirmed. Also, it was reiterated that those seeking ordination, recognition of ordination by another denomination,
should be baptized by immersion, since that is the form of baptism practiced by the MB church.

Since there was considerable difference in opinion on requiring immersion for ordination to the pastoral ministry, the matter was referred to the churches for discussion. The Board of Reference and Counsel reported to the conference in Reedley in 1984, that our churches were quite divided on this issue. However, the board recommended to the conference that we continue, for the time being, to adhere to our former decision to require baptism by immersion for ordination.

The discussion on the conference floor in 1984, indicated the need for further study and resolution of this matter. The Board of Reference and Counsel is of the opinion that by allowing believers who are baptized by another mode, upon confession of their faith to become full-fledged members of our churches, the conference clearly indicates that it accepts different modes of believers’ baptism as biblically tenable. (It does, however, rule out infant baptism.) Whereas immersion signifies primarily dying to sin and rising with Christ to newness of life (Romans 6), pouring signifies the receipt of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2,8,9,10,19).

The Board of Reference and Counsel, therefore, recommends:

1. That we re-affirm that the MB church understands the New Testament as teaching believers’ baptism. (See Confession of Faith, p.17)
2. That we re-affirm that the MB church practices only one form of baptism and this be immersion. (See Confession of Faith, p.17)
3. That we re-affirm that only those who have been baptized upon confession of faith in Jesus Christ, regardless of the mode of baptism, be accepted as members in our churches. (See Confession of Faith, p.17)
4. When pastors are appointed, it is understood that they both teach and practice baptism by immersion. And it should be remembered that we do not baptize believers who are unwilling to become members of one of our local congregations. (See Confession of Faith, p.17)
5. That we encourage candidates for ordination to the pastoral ministry (or for recognition of ordination) who have been baptized by a mode other than immersion, to consider re-baptism, in order to serve with greater freedom in a denomination that practices immersion.
6. That, however, we accept also those candidates for ordination to the pastoral ministry who have been baptized upon confession of faith by some mode of baptism other than immersion.
Item 5: **Amendment:**

That we request candidates for ordination to the pastoral ministry (or for recognition of ordination) who have been baptized by a mode other than immersion to consider the option of immersion in order to serve with greater freedom in our denomination.”

M/s/c

Item 4: Amendment: That at baptism the believer enters into full fellowship and work of the church” replaces second sentence of item 4.

M/s/ **Defeated**

M/s/c to accept resolution.

**Pastoral Care (86)**

1. That all pastors of Mennonite Brethren Churches who have joined the Conference within the last two years be asked to participate in the 1988 Orientation Sessions as well as participate in the Global Missiological Issues Consultation and the School for Ministry.

2. That all pastors of Mennonite Brethren Churches who assume a pastorate after January 1, 1988 be required to spend the month of January at the Seminary in the new pastors’ Orientation Program.

3. That the General Conference fund one half of the cost of the orientation program and that the pastor’s church be asked to fund the other half as part of its commitment to orient the pastor to the Mennonite Brethren Church.

**1995**

**Ordination (16-18)**

1. That we retain ordination (laying on of hands) as the preferred practice of affirmation for those called to leadership in the denomination.

2. That when a pastor declines ordination, the congregation conduct a commissioning service that allows the person “license” in the eyes of the law and other agencies to practice ministry. This commissioning should apply only to that particular task and not to future assignments.
3. That in services of affirmation (especially ordination) there be instruction both for the leader and the congregation, indicating that such affirmation is not designed to confer status but affirmation for sacrificial service and ministry. This instruction should include warnings about the unbiblical tendency to allow ordination to foster a separation of clergy and laity.

4. That BFL formulate standards (for presentation at Convention ’97) whereby those having been ordained and/or affirmed may have that affirmation withdrawn or may voluntarily surrender their credentials. We are thinking, for example, of cases where the once-affirmed are found guilty of sexual sin, financial fraud, or abuse of power and authority. The same could well apply to those who enter other occupations and may be prone to use their previous affirmation to enhance their marketability. Standards may include the following:

   a. Persons who withdraw from the denomination should surrender their credentials.
   b. Persons should not at any one time hold ordination/affirmation from more than one denomination.
   c. Persons should not use another denomination’s ordination/affirmation while serving a Mennonite Brethren church.
   d. Retired ministers may retain their ordination/affirmation for purposes of gaining legitimate government allowances.
   e. When there are other questions regarding surrender of credentials we may appeal to the ethical conscience of the person involves, and/or call for the surrender of credentials in consultation with the conference.

5. That in all ordination/affirmation services the larger conferences (provincial/district and/or national) be involved in the examination and public affirmation service as a sign that congregations are part of a wider constituency. Suggestions for service components are found in the Church Leadership Manual.

6. That congregations be encouraged to formulate ceremonies (liturgies, rituals, etc.) to affirm other workers in the church who do not fall into those categories where we ordain, commission, and license.

7. That the Board of Faith and Life will arrange for a system whereby records of ordination/affirmation are compiled and periodic reviews are solicited.

M/s/c
1999

Credentialing Courses (30, 74)

That the credentialing bodies of the General Conference of MB Churches require all full-time pastoral staff members to complete approved course work in MB history, theology, and polity within two years of their appointment.

Implementation:
1. Costs for the courses be shared among participants, sending congregations, and regional and national credentialing bodies.
2. Course syllabi will be developed by BFL in consultation with the MB Biblical Seminary.
3. Courses will be offered annually by qualified instructors in the various regions if the Conference as needed.
4. Seminary credit will be negotiated.
5. The course will include face-to-face instruction, mentoring and readings.
6. Regional credentialing boards will continue to supervise completion of the ministry questionnaire, interviews, licenses, and ordination.

M/s/c to amend the motion to read: “to require all full-time pastoral staff members who have not studied at one of our MB institutions, to complete…”

M/s/c carried by a significant majority show of hands to accept the recommendation.

■ Peace and Nonresistance

1981

Love and Non-Resistance (50-51)

The Mennonite Brethren Confession of Faith states:

We believe that Christians should live by the law of love and practice the forgiveness of enemies as taught and exemplified by the Lord Jesus. The church, as the body of Christ, is a fellowship of redeemed, separated people, controlled by redemptive love. Its evangelistic responsibility is to present Christ, the Prince of Peace, as the answer to human need, enmity and violence. The evil brutal inhuman nature of war stands in contradiction to the new nature of the Christian. The
Christian seeks to practice Christ’s law of love in all relationships, and in all situations, including those involving personal injustice, social upheaval and international tensions. We believe that it is not God’s will that Christians take up arms in military service, but that, where possible, they perform alternate service to reduce strife, alleviate suffering and bear witness to the love of Christ.

We are concerned that a goodly number of our church members (including some pastors) view our position on “love and nonresistance” as an optional doctrine. In some churches this doctrine is not taught; in some it is even opposed; and in some instances young men are even encouraged to take up arms in military service. This we consider to be a serious violation of our peace position and of the teachings of Jesus, as we have understood these in our history.

In the preface to our Confession of Faith it is stated that confessions of faith are not to be given equal status with the Bible. That is in keeping with our position that the Bible is our highest authority and that our understanding of it is never perfect, and that we must, therefore, always be open to new light.

However, when we accepted the present Confession of Faith, in 1975, that represented our church’s understanding of the main doctrines of the Scripture, and such a Confession can be changed or modified only when our conference comes to a new understanding of some article in our confession through the study of the Scriptures.

We recognize that not all believers share our understanding of this biblical teaching, but we would strongly urge that when churches call pastors they make sure that they adhere to all the articles in our Confession of Faith. Those churches and boards in our provinces and districts that process the ordination of brothers for the pastoral ministry should insure that the person to be ordained shares our conference’s position of “love and nonresistance.” Also, pastors are encouraged to make sure that this doctrine is taught.

M/s/c.
Political Involvement

1978

Political Involvement (6-8)

The Christian Church has been given a mandate to bring Christian concerns to bear in all situations; we have been instructed to bring the Gospel to “all the world” (Mark 16:15) and that directive allows for no exceptions in terms of either geography or society. No people or structures escape God’s concern or judgment. For faithful Christians an acknowledgement of this mandate probably requires cautious, selective involvement in the political realm. In contemporary North America this means that we accept the opportunities and challenges we face, realizing that opportunity plus ability creates accountability, but we also remember that for the Christian the church is always primary and the state, at best, secondary.

The Biblical commandment that we pray for those in positions of political authority implies that we should become informed about the political situation in which we find ourselves. That is the very least that is required of us. But most Christians believe that simply being informed is not enough. They believe that Christians should also vote, thereby both expressing a concern about what happens and seeking to influence the outcome. We agree with the view that in most situations voting can be seen as an expression of responsible Christian citizenship.

While realizing that there are differences of opinion on the matter, we also believe that in general it is proper to communicate our individual and collective views to government officials. Informed Christian citizens contribute in a positive way when they express support, concern, or insight as the occasion warrants. However, in any advocacy both ends and means must always be consistent with Christian standards.

Concerning standing for elective office we realize that the arguments are not all on one side and that here, again, there are important differences of opinion on the matter. We also realize that there is no “one to one” correlation between Anabaptist Christianity and any political creed or ideology. Accordingly, we suggest that local, non-partisan levels of office-holding may present important opportunities for service but that the situation becomes more complicated and difficult where party ideologies and party loyalties are important. Members of the brotherhood who contemplate campaigning for political offices should be aware of the probable tensions and difficulties involved and should discuss their situation with fellow Christians before making commitments.

To those of our number who, nonetheless, do feel called to political service we say: “Be salt and light; promote human dignity and decency, and do
not compromise on essentials. Additionally, always retain a stance of Christian criticality and avoid slipping into a conscience-easing ‘chaplaincy’ role of rationalizing whatever any party or government undertakes. Also, since the masses of Christians hold various political views, be doubly careful not to create bad publicity for God’s church.”

In general we affirm the belief that the church, not the state or government, is God’s primary medium of communication, vehicle of action, and bearer of the meaning of history. Whether in politics or in any other pursuit, we seek to serve in those situations and offices which enable us to practice Christian servanthood and do well to shun those in which our Christian servanthood and discipleship is compromised or weakened.

Accepted.

- Race Relations

1981 (51-53)

We frequently hear expressions of concern about discrimination in our churches and conferences. This matter was brought to our attention again at the 1978 conference, in the form of a prepared statement publicly read. In response to this concern we were instructed to prepare a position paper on race relations. We refer you to the 1963 Yearbook (pp. 42, 43) in which there is a thorough statement regarding our position on this matter. In addition to this previously adopted resolution we present this paper based upon our present understanding of the Scriptures, in the hope that each of us will practice loving acceptance of people from all cultures, languages and ethnic orientations.

Race Relations

An evaluation of the intrinsic worth of one human being by another is improper because all have originated from the same stock (Acts 17:26 NEB; “He created every race of men of one stock, to inhabit the whole earth’s surface.”) and consequently, have the same intrinsic value. Racial prejudice is a consequence of Satanic deception. It is a result of his evil influence that some people regard themselves as being of greater worth than others. This holds true, also, of racial discrimination.

Discrimination is the giving of preference to one person or group over another. Since God is the creator and owner of all things visible and invisible, he alone has the right to give preference to whom he wills. He revealed his love to one particular race more fully and accurately than to any other of all the sin-blinded races of the world (Deut. 4:32-39, 7:6-9). To God alone belongs this right and prerogative of preference.
Because we of the Mennonite Brethren faith profess to believe that:

1. All races of men and women have originated from one stock
   (Acts 17:26, “He created every race of men of one stock, to inhabit the whole earth’s surface.”).
2. All races of men and women are equally creatures of God by virtue of having been created by one father (Mal. 2:10, “Do we not all have one father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously each against his brother so as to profane the covenant of our fathers?”; Isaiah 64:8, “But now, O Lord, Thou art our Father, We are the clay, and Thou our potter; And all of us are the work of Thy hand.”).
3. God has redeemed believers in Christ as instruments through which he wills to reveal his reconciling virtues to all races (1 Peter 2:9-10, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”; Matthew 28:18-20, “And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I command you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’”).
4. God wishes to abolish through Christ the enmity which separates people from one another (Eph. 2:11-16; Gal. 3:28, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”).
5. We are commanded by our sovereign Lord to whom we voluntarily have pledged our obedience, to do to others what we would that they do to us (Matthew 7:12, “Therefore whatever you want others to do for you, do so for them; for this is the Law and the Prophets.”; Lev.19:18, “You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord.”; Matthew 19:19, “Honor your father and mother; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”).

**We covenant together**

1. To humbly confess our sins of omission and commission to God and to any persons or group against whom we have sinned, and to ask forgiveness and pardon.
2. To teach deliberately by word and demonstration in our churches, homes and social relationships near us and far from us that men and women of all races are equally creatures of God by natural birth.

3. To make an equal effort to proclaim and demonstrate the redeeming love of Christ to the ethnic and racial group within the boundaries of our continent as we do to those of other races outside the continental boundaries of our respective nations.

4. To return to the practice of our Anabaptist fathers imitating their efforts to include in our fellowship people from all nations and races while at the same time taking care to respect those customs and languages which are distinct to their cultures which do not violate the teachings and the love of Christ.

5. To do all within our power to make amends for the wrongs we have committed against those of other ethnic groups and races, remembering that by sinning against them, we sin against Christ.

M/s/c.

- Urban Ministry

1978

Mennonite Brethren and the Urban Challenge (9-10)

The Mennonite Brethren of North America live in a culture that is approximately 75% urban. The general trend for the foreseeable future continues to be further urbanization. The next two decades will see (say urbanologists and demographers) between 85-90% of all the inhabitants of the United States and Canada living in cities and towns of over 2,500. In the United States, about 30% of the people live in cities of over 100,000. Mennonite Brethren churches appear to be able to adapt to, and to minister effectively in the smaller towns. In large, multicultural, urban centers we must confess that we have not been too successful.

Acknowledging the fact that urbanism has become a way of life—not only for the culture that surrounds us, but also for the culture of which the Mennonite Brethren have become a part—we need to clearly set forth and accept the challenge of learning how to serve and minister to the urban masses. While the past century has been a century of revolutions, the revolution which most challenges the North American Mennonite Brethren church today is the move from rural to urban to metropolitan. The example of Jesus as well as that of the apostles, especially Paul, stand us in good stead. It is significant that most of the early Christian church communities were founded in the major cities of power—Corinth, Jerusalem, Antioch, Philippi, Rome, and Ephesus. It
appears to have been part of the strategy of the Holy Spirit to plant His church in the great cities of the Roman Empire.

The rural heritage of the Mennonite Brethren has tendencies to create fear and anxiety in our approach to urban ministry. We know cities to be places of loneliness and impersonality; they are places of complex racial injustice and social evil; they are oppressive in religious indifference and secularism; they are places of crime and sin. Yet it is precisely in the cities where the salt and yeast and light of the Gospel are needed the most and can make the greatest impact.

Therefore, realizing that the mandate of Mark 16:15 “Go ye into all the world…” includes the world of our cities, we wish to affirm that:

1. We accept the challenge of the urban frontier. We hereby recognize the importance of our church witness to our urban culture and commit ourselves to prayerfully find ways to serve our Lord in the urban culture.

2. We recognize that the nature of the church is determined by the nature of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This Gospel cuts across all class barriers. The fellowship of the Spirit prevents ethnic, racial, economic, intellectual, and sex barriers from being set up. The Kingdom is for all people, insomuch as Jesus died for all.

3. We assert that we are a covenant community based, among other things, on mutual service. Just as Jesus did not come to be served, but to serve, so we commit ourselves to be a servant church. We confess that it is easily possible to be imprisoned in buildings and static methods, which often prevent us from effectively reaching a mobile society. We wish to become more responsible students of our society so that our methods of ministry better reflect the whole Gospel. While we affirm aggressive evangelism, we mean by that the ministry to the total needs of man, modeling our methods after the methods of Jesus.

4. We continue to assert our prophetic ministry to the urban culture. Historically the Mennonite Brethren church stood for righteousness, justice, and mercy. We wish to continue in that prophetic tradition, recognizing that as imperfect as our witness is, God has called us to be light to a darkened world. Whether our witness is directed to inequities in the market place, in labor relations, in race relations, in government/state relations, et cetera, we wish to speak the truth in love, all the whole urging that justice be done, “for righteousness exalts a nation.” We commit ourselves to be peacemakers and reconciling agents of the love of God.

5. We declare our openness to new patterns of ministry that take into account urban man’s anonymity, mobility and technology. We pray for increased
sensitivity and a compassionate spirit toward cities filled with needy people. Our churches must concern themselves with the activity of God in the world. Through urban studies courses in our seminary, colleges and Bible institutes, through urban church workshops and conferences, we will exercise our stewardship in planning so that it might seem “good to the Holy Spirit and us” to make us effective in urban ministries.

Accepted.

- **VISION STATEMENT**

1990

**Conference Vision Statement (22-25)**

A. The General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches of North America adopt the above vision as an expression of its united purpose for the next decade.
B. The vision statement guides the actions of local Mennonite conferences and congregations as they initiate future programs, allocate human, material and financial resources, and discern and call future leaders.
C. All North American Mennonite Brethren schools and agencies focus their mission and execute their programs in support of achieving our common vision as Mennonite Brethren people. This support should be explicit in the published mission statements and projected programs of Mennonite Brethren schools and agencies.
D. The Board of Reference and Counsel publish, at the next three triennial conventions, a progress report on the realization of our vision based on specific submissions from our district and provincial conferences and our schools and agencies.

MS/c

*[Editorial Note: For text of Vision Statement see p. 22-25 in 1990 Yearbook.]*

- **Women In Ministry**

1981

**The Place of Women in the Church (46-48)**

Many churches are asking whether we as Mennonite Brethren have been faithful to the Scriptures by restricting certain ministries in the church to men only. The Canadian Board of Spiritual and Social Concerns brought a
resolution on this matter to the Canadian Conference some five years ago. Since then the question has come up repeatedly at both local and conference levels and BORAC put it on the agenda for the study conference last May in Clearbrook, B.C. In view of the continuing debate on this matter we would like to present the following concerns and proposals to our General Conference.

1. We should be careful not to take our models for the husband/wife relationship and for the place of woman in the church from the current feminist movement, which is largely secular in orientation. We recognize, of course, that movements in society at times force students of the Bible to ask whether they have understood the Scriptures correctly, but the church must always hold a critical stance toward such movements, including also Christian interpretations which have denied Christian women their rightful place in family, church and society.

2. We would caution against those modern currents of thought which tend to minimize the significance of a woman’s high calling to be a wife and a mother to her children, and we should do all that we can to strengthen the family and to establish it on biblical principles.

3. We, as men, confess that we have not always loved our wives and honored them as we should. However, we believe that the Scriptures teach that “the husband is the head of the wife” and that a wife’s submission to a loving husband is in no way demeaning. True fulfillment comes to both husband and wife when they seek to serve one another, and to be submissive one to another (Eph. 5:21, “and be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.”), rather than in the desire for equality or even superiority. This, however, does not mean that we condone any form of oppression (either of men or women) in our society.

4. We recognize that the language of Scripture reflects the patriarchal societies in which the Bible emerged. We should not, however, sit in judgment over Scripture, for God’s Word was given for all times and all cultures. It should be understood that when words such as “brother,” “brotherhood” and the like are used for the believers we should not accuse those who use this biblical patriarchal language in teaching and preaching, of being anti-feminist. On the other hand we should avoid using sexist language that offends.

5. We acknowledge the great contribution of our sisters to the work of the Lord in the local church, in mission fields, and other areas of kingdom work, and we would encourage our churches to continue to discover and to draw upon the spiritual resources found in our sisters for various ministries in the church and in the world. This may also include participation in local church and conference ministries.
6. We do not hold that the reciprocal relationship between male and female, as established in creation, has been annulled by redemption. We do not believe that the Bible’s teaching on the headship of the husband was bearing on the place of the woman in the church. We do not hold that the passages in the New Testament (such as 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2), which put restrictions on the Christian woman, have become irrelevant, even though therefore, do need to be re-applied. And while we recognize that women played a significant role in the early church—something we would encourage them to do in our day as well—we do not believe that the Mennonite Brethren Church should ordain women to pastoral leadership.

After discussion an amendment was passed to point #5, by adding at the end, the words, “if the Local Church so chooses;” and the heading of the resolution was changed to read, “Resolution of the Ministry of the Women in the Church.”

Motion to receive the resolution with the provision that an explanatory paragraph may be added.
Carried

1987

Women in Ministry (46-47; 66-67; 72)

The Board of Reference and Counsel submitted a resolution in 1981 that was designed to affirm and free women for ministry in the church. The resolution was interpreted as too negative by the conference delegates. BORAC was mandated in 1981 and again in 1984 to prepare a more affirmative statement. BORAC submits the following resolution for approval and implementation in our churches:

We believe that God created both men and women in his image, and therefore both share an equal humanity before God (Gen. 1:27).

We believe that all Christians are joint heirs with Christ, and therefore both women and men experience full salvation in him (Gal. 3:28).

We believe that the Spirit grants gifts to all believers, irrespective of gender, for diverse ministries both in the church and in the world, and therefore both men and women minister God’s grace (1 Peter 4:10).

We believe that God calls all men and women to serve in the church and in the world; we also believe he calls some women, as well as some men, for ministries within the context of the church (Acts 2:17,18; Eph.4:11ff.; Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Peter 4:10).
We believe that since God has gifted and called both men and women, the church should recognize and affirm them in their ministry for the common good of the church (1 Cor. 12:7; Rom. 16:1-16).

We urge that the Mennonite Brethren churches free and affirm women for ministries in the church, at home and abroad—e.g. decision-making (committees and boards), evangelizing (visitation and discipling), teaching (Bible study and preaching), pastoral counseling (shepherding and soul care). We affirm women as associate pastors or “leading elder.” (We recognize that the ordination of women in ministry is an issue that is not addressed in this statement. It is not addressed because ordination is an issue in the Mennonite Brethren Church for many men as well as women. Therefore BORAC will address the question of ordination in the future.)

We acknowledge that the evangelical church, worldwide, is in transition in its understanding of the scope of ministries of women in the church and world. Many evangelicals believe that neither 1 Cor. 14:34, 35 nor 1 Tim. 2:11-15 “rules out the ordination of women as preachers, teachers or leaders in the church” (Christianity Today, October 3, 1986). Other evangelicals believe these texts are more restrictive. Mennonite Brethren people also differ in the interpretation of these texts. We recognize that significant exegetical issues are involved in these alternatives. Therefore BORAC recommends a careful biblical study process by our congregations on the role and ministry of women in the church, and has commissioned the preparation of a book and study guide of all relevant biblical passages.

Motion to delete that sentence that reads “We affirm women as associate pastors but do not, at this time, endorse women as senior pastors or ‘leading elder’.”
Amendment declared out of order by parliamentarian.

Moved to delete the words of the paragraph that follow “at home and abroad.”
Parliamentarian rules this amendment out of order.

Motion to refer this resolution to the Board of Reference and Counsel for reconsideration and presentation at this conference.
M/s/c

Recommended revision of Final Two Paragraphs:

We encourage our churches to free and affirm women for ministries in the church, at home and abroad, in decision-making, evangelizing, teaching, counseling, encouragement, music, youth, visitations etc.
BORAC recommends a careful biblical study process by our congregations on the role and ministry of women in the church, and has commissioned the preparation of a book and study guide of all relevant biblical passages. In the meantime, the guidelines of the 1981 resolution remain in effect.

M/s/c

1990

Ordination of Women for Chaplaincy Ministries (126-127)

That the Conference approve the ordination or licensing of women, as required by state or provincial law, for chaplaincy ministries in care-giving and/or correctional institutions.

Rationale
1. The recommendation is ministry specific, that women be affirmed as caregivers by the Mennonite Brethren Church through ordination or licensing to chaplaincy ministries.
2. The recommendation is consistent with an earlier tradition of ordaining women for diaconal ministries in the church and in care-giving institutions.
3. Women are in great demand for chaplaincy ministries because women are experienced as affective caregivers and because hospitals and care-giving institutions are seeking to balance the number of men and women chaplains.
4. Appointment to chaplaincy ministries requires a master of divinity degree and denominational ordination or licensing, depending on district or provincial requirements.
5. Mennonite Brethren women who need ordination for appointment to chaplaincy ministries must leave the conference to seek ordination with a different denomination.

Referred to Board of Faith and Life

1993

Women in Leadership (33-38)

Terms of Reference
The Board of Faith and Life recommends the approval of the recommendation, Women in Leadership, with the following terms of reference:
1. That we understand the recommendation as a mediating and interim solution to diversity and disagreement in the denomination, including this Board. The Board’s intent with this resolution is to act in a pastoral manner.

2. That we understand the issue of women in ministry as a polity issue that is based in disagreements about biblical interpretation. It does not involve a historical central theological teaching of the Christian church (e.g. Christology, salvation).

3. That this resolution supersedes the 1981 and 1987 resolutions.

4. That if a local church calls a woman to leading pastoral ministry, that affirmation is for that local church.

5. That this recommendation does not address the question of the ordination of women to pastoral ministry. Reflection on this issue will be part of the ’94 Denver Consultation on ordination and authority in ministry.

6. That the Board of Faith and Life be authorized to work out some of the practical implications and issues of the recommendation (e.g. licensing, pastoral support systems) in consultation with district and provincial boards of faith and life.

7. That the Board of Faith and Life work on the continued study of the issues and the processing of disagreements with the goal of greater consensus and unity.

[Editorial Note: For Preamble, see p. 34]

Recommendation

The Mennonite Brethren Church has formally discussed the role of women in ministry since 1974. All study conferences and resolutions have affirmed the giftedness of women in ministry. All churches are blessing women for ministry within the congregation.

During the past triennium, Mennonite Brethren have again in good faith examined the biblical material and arrived at different and sometimes opposing views on the question of women in leadership. Despite our efforts, we are unable to come to consensus on the issue at this time. For these reasons, let us agree that neither this matter, nor the various convictions regarding it, shall be used to question or doubt one another’s Christian integrity and faithfulness. We covenant that this issue shall not be a test of our faithfulness to Christ. We also resolve not to break the bond of fellowship with one another on this issue, but to allow for diversity of conviction and practice in the appointment of women to pastoral leadership in ways that are consistent with the governance patterns of the local congregation.
Amendment: To add the following statement to the end of the resolution: “We resolve to continue in prayerful study of Scriptures and affirm that the Bible remain authoritative and normative for the local congregation also in this area. We will continue to seek consensus in our Biblical interpretation.”

M/s/c

A ballot vote was called.
M/s/c that this decision shall be decided by a two-thirds majority vote.
A ballot vote indicated that the amended recommendation was defeated (39% in favor, 61% opposed).

1999 (30, 61-62, 68)

That women be encouraged to minister in the church in every function other than the lead pastorate. The church is to invite women to exercise leadership on Conference boards, in pastoral staff positions and in our congregations, institutions, and agencies. We ask women to minister as gifted, called and affirmed. We call the church to be increasingly alert to the gifts of women and to become more active in calling them to minister. We further call people in the Spirit of Christ to relate to one another in mutual respect as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Implications:
1. The 1981 resolution regarding ordination of women remains in effect.
2. Conference leadership roles should be open to men and women equally. If necessary, changes should be made in the structures by which boards are selected to facilitate service by gifted women.
3. Local congregations are called to free women to give leadership and service in all positions other than the lead pastorate.
4. Members of the Mennonite Brethren church are to pray for growing unity in biblical understanding and in the practice of affirming leaders.
5. Leaders are called to open the informal networks so that all members of leadership groups serve as full partners without any form of prejudicial exclusion from their inner workings, whether intentional or not, because of race, gender, age, or ethnicity.

M/s/c to amend as follows: change “them” to “women” on second to last sentence.
A ballot vote was requested.
M/s/c. (241-yes, 28-no).
• Other Issues

1978

Culture and Scripture (203)

That the Board of Reference and Counsel make this a matter of study during the next three years. Carried

1981

Next Convention (5)

The Board of Reference and Counsel moved a resolution as follows:

“The Mennonite Brethren will be completing 100 years of World Missions in 1985. BOMAS believes that this merits celebration. The BORAC, therefore, is planning to make the 1984 convention the occasion to introduce the concept of an international federation of Mennonite Brethren churches and to emphasize World Missions.”

Adopted

Study Helps (57)

Moved that we request BORAC to provide study helps on selected resolutions to our local congregations.

Carried.
6. Board of Resource Ministries (until 1990, Board of Christian Literature and Board of Mass Media)


1993

*Jubilee Curriculum (30)*

That the Conference become a cooperative user of the *Jubilee* curriculum and that our churches consider this curriculum as an option for use in their Sunday schools.

M/s/c

*With Publication (30)*

That the Conference endorse the *With* publication for youth for use in our churches.

M/s/c
7. Board of Trustees

1978

**Giving and Education (200)**

1. That the Board of Reference and Counsel urge upon the member churches of our conference the teaching of systematic giving.”

   Accepted

2. With respect to the stewardship department of this board the following are recommended:
   a) That the deferred giving program of the stewardship program be continued.
      Accepted
   b) That the cost of operation of the deferred giving program be funded from the program earnings.
      Accepted
   c) That the educational ministry of the stewardship department be continued.
      Accepted
   d) That the educational ministry be funded as part of the Conference operating budget.
      Accepted.

1981

**RRSP Program (135)**

That the Convention authorize this Board to proceed with implementation of an RRSP program in Canada and an IRA program in the U.S.A., details of which are to be established by this Board.

Carried

**Donor’s Fund (135)**

That the Convention approve acceptance of the Canadian foundation known as the Donor’s Fund from the Canadian Conference, to be continued as a work of the General Conference, subject to such changes in structure as this Board may deem expedient.

Carried

1984
Stewardship Education (147)

Walter Kehler moved that the Board of Trustees provide materials for stewardship education outside of budget funds to the amount of $3,000.

M/s/c

1990

Transfer of Assets (125-126)

We, the General Conference Board of Trustees, recommend the adoption of the following resolutions:

(1) that the endowment, annuity, deposit and trust funds of the General Conference, together with all commitments, responsibilities, and super-vision therefore, and designated receivables, be and the same are herewith transferred to the respective national conferences to which they designated by the Board of Trustees as being the respective areas where said funds originated;

(2) that the physical assets of the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, namely the physical plant and land located at 4812-4824 East Butler Avenue in Fresno, Calif., be transferred to the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, a California corporation. It is understood that each National Conference (Canadian & U.S.) holds 50% of the interest in the seminary corporation;

(3) that the stewardship services of the General Conference respective to the management of and accountability for all assets transferred also be transferred to the respective national conferences; and

(4) that the Board of Trustees of the General Conference, and the Board of Trustees/Management of the two national conferences be and are hereby authorized and empowered to make all transfers and necessary agreements, complete all documentation and do all things necessary to give fullest effect to the foregoing resolutions.

Rationale

The transfer of the functions and services of the General Conference Board of Trustees to the national conferences to serve as agents for the General Conference was approved at the 1987 General Conference and became operational immediately.
The transfer of assets concept has been endorsed by both national conferences at their 1986 conventions as approved and recommended by the national Boards of Trustees/Management. The reasons for the resolutions to transfer the assets are namely, differing governmental regulations and requirements, differing tax-laws and incorporation laws, and more meaningful control and accountability. It is becoming increasingly more difficult to receive charitable gifts of property, process deeds of trusts, etc., when assets are owned and managed by an international board.

In Canada the assets are already legally in the name of the Canadian Conference; the same should be done in the U.S.

Add: It is understood that each national conference [Canada, U.S.] holds 50% of the interest in the Seminary Corporation.

M/s/c
8. Constitution and By-Laws

[Editorial Note: In 1978 a revised Constitution was provisionally accepted by the Conference (see 1978 Yearbook, p. 62), and formally accepted with further minor changes in 1981. The Board of Reference and Counsel was made responsible for bringing forward any amendments. In 1990 a new Constitution was accepted and responsibility for the Constitution was now placed with the newly created Executive Council (1990 Yearbook, p. 28). Because of these factors as well as because of the significant amount of material related specifically to the Constitution, these materials have been placed together in the following section rather than under one of the boards. The issues related to the dissolution of the Conference have also been placed in this section. However, the final Memoranda of Understanding respecting the divestiture of the various ministries in 2002 have not been included here. These can be found in the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches Executive Report: The Final Chapter 2002(2003).]

1978 (62)

That the Convention approve the 1978 Constitution as outlined in the final draft.
[Editorial Note: See pp. 18-62 for Constitution and Bylaws.]

Motion: That we table this motion.
Defeated

Amended Motion: That we accept this constitution as a provisional document and then work on changes as to structure.
Accepted. Yes-152, No-124.

1978 (104)

Reducing the number of Board members (BOMAS)
That we reduce the number of Board members from 15 to 11.
Carried

1978 (177)

That we refer the recommendation of the Canadian Conference [1978] regarding the Board of Mass Media [that ARTICLE XII entitled “The Board of Mass Media” be deleted (from the new constitution—Ed.) and that we
encourage each area to develop this ministry] to the Board of Reference and Counsel for study in the interim.

Carried

1981 (36)

We recommend that the media ministries described in the constitution of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, Article XII, Section 3, be continued:

- to attend to the development of programs, ministries and services in the area of media according to the needs of the churches and Conference
- to study issues of common such as effective contemporary communications, impact of the media, and broadening and updating traditional views of communication;
- to represent the Conference in consultation and projects with other organizations.

This recommendation became obsolete since the delegation voted to retain Mass Media in the General Conference structure (see below).

1981 (42-43)

1. That the General Conference continue to be a brotherhood of churches from Canada and the U.S.A. under the name, “The General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches,” and that the following boards constitute its organizational structure: i.e.
   a) The Board of Reference and Counsel
   b) The Board of Missions and Services
   c) The Board of Trustees
   d) The Board of Christian Literature
   e) The Board of the MB Biblical Seminary

Accepted

2. That we delete the Board of Christian Education and the Board of Mass Media on the General Conference level. And that these functions be carried out by national, provincial and district conferences. Cooperating with programs and sharing of resources that will facilitate mutual enrichment and avoid duplication wherever possible, should be encouraged.

M/s/c to separate action on the Board of Christian Education and the Board of Mass Media.
Recommendation re Board of Christian Education was defeated.
Recommendation re Board of Mass Media was defeated because it lacked a two-thirds majority vote as required (267 for, 157 against).

3. That consideration be given to developing some sort of international federation of Mennonite Brethren churches for the purpose of sharing faith and fellowship, thus allowing for a cross-cultural, international celebration of faith. It was agreed by consensus that we change the wording from “international federation” to “international fellowship.”

M/s/c

Constitution Committee Recommendations (49-50)

That the Convention approve the 1978 Constitution as outlined in the 1978 General Conference Yearbook, subject to the following amendments:

1. That the Articles be renumbered as follows:

   I. The General Conference
   II The Conference and its Component Constituencies
   III The Conference and its Churches
   IV Membership
   V Conventions of the Conference
   VI Elections and Terms of Office
   VII Organization of the Conference
   VIII Executive Officers, Program and Nominating Committees
   IX Board of Reference and Counsel
   X Board of Christian Literature
   XI Board of Missions
   XII Board of the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary
   XIII Board of Trustees
   XIV Dissolution of a Church or Conference
   XV Amendment

2. That the following corrections be made:

   2.1 Article 11, Sec. 3.3
       Change “post-graduate theological education” to “graduate theological education.”
2.2 Article V, Sec. 4.1
Change “The Convention shall be held alternately in the Canadian and United States areas” to “The Convention shall be held alternately in Canada and the United States.”

2.3 Article I, Sec. 2.1
Change “The General Conference consists of the Canadian Conference and the United States Conference” to say “The General Conference consists of the churches of the Canadian Conference and the United States Conference.”

That the constitution, as provisionally accepted in 1978 and printed in the 1978 Yearbook, be ratified, with several editorial corrections. M/s/c.

1984

Board Membership: Notice of Motion (137-138)

That we change the constitution to allow the appointment of one member from the Department of Christian Education of our Seminary in Fresno to the Board of Christian Education.

[Editorial Note: This Notice of Motion appears not to have been acted on in subsequent years.]

1987

Task Force (49-50; 74)

Preamble
During the last triennium BORAC has been faced with matters pertaining to organizational structure and the need for conference personnel. In order to help resolve the need for structural changes and the need for a full-time General (Executive) Secretary, BORAC proposes the appointment of a Task Force to accomplish the following assignment.

1. Review the General Conference organizational structure and present changes as required.
2. Assess the need and create a statement of rationale for the appointment of a full-time conference personnel.
3. Prepare a written role description of such a person.
4. Present a proposal for implementation to BORAC and the General Conference.

**Recommendation**
That BORAC appoint a three member Task Force to prepare and present its proposal to BORAC during the next triennium.

**M/s/c**

**Notice of Motion #1: Nominating Committee (50-51; 74)**

Notice of intent to change the constitution to provide for change in the structure and function of the Nominating Committee. See Article VIII, Sec.6.

**Background:**
The function of the committee has been to solicit, compile and submit a list of nominees for some conference board vacancies. This function excludes the executive officers and nominating committee. This committee of three, elected with nominations from the floor, has functioned without a clearly defined job description, time-line expectation or budget provision. There is no provision for accountability to, or communication with, conference administrative leadership.

**Resolution:**
1. That we enlarge the committee to five persons with two elected from U.S. and two from Canada, and one appointed by BORAC and reporting to BORAC.
2. That the nominating committee be accountable to BORAC and report to BORAC.
3. That the nominating committee submit nominees for all conference board positions including the executive officers.
4. That the nominees for the nominating committee be submitted by BORAC, in concert with the nominating committee.
5. That BORAC call upon the nominating committee to present the nominees to the convention of the General Conference.
6. That BORAC establish a budget-line item for the work of the nominating committee.
7. That the constitution provide for staggered six-year terms for the members of the nominating committee so as to insure continuity.
8. That the nominating committee be authorized to function in harmony with this resolution immediately and that BORAC be charged with initiating the rewriting of the constitution to include these changes and present it to the 1990 convention for approval.
**Rationale**
1. These changes will provide for a better bi-national and geographic balance on the nominating committee.
2. These changes will broaden the discernment capabilities of the committee to discover and present the qualified leaders among us.
3. This change will provide a more thorough and thoughtful approach to this important function of discovering, selecting and presenting gifted, qualified, willing workers for the ministries of our conference.

*M/s/c*

**Notice of Motion #2: Change of Name (51-52)**

Notice of intent that the name General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches be changed to Mennonite Brethren Church of North America.

**Rationale**

1. In 1963 our name, the Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America was changed to the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches. The intent was to assume a name that would transcend national and geographical boundaries. It was believed that under this name it would be a simple matter to bring national conferences into one General Conference. Obviously that has not happened. Not is it anticipated that it will. Therefore, our name needs to restore the continental designation it formerly held.

2. Our name should be consistent with and reflect our theology. The word “churches” in our present name suggests a view of the church that accentuates local autonomy. The word “church” instead of “churches” would reflect more accurately our ecclesiology and our desired polity. The word “conference” is descriptive of a loosely bound confederation or association of churches. The deletion of the word “conference” would allow for a stronger emphasis on the word “church.” The use of the singular would draw attention to our unity and to our understanding of covenant community.

3. The term “General Conference” has been confused with the General Conference Mennonite Church. There is confusion among professional people such as attorneys and accountants as well as Internal Revenue Service with the use of the name “General Conference.” Deleting the words “General Conference” would remove this closed identity (p. 51- 52).

*(See Yearbook of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1963, p. 43-45).*
Statement was given as a *notice of motion*.

**Notice of Motion #3: Board of Christian Education and Board of Mass Media (28, 52-53; 74)**

Notice of intent to change the constitution Articles X and XII.

1. That we delete the Board of Christian Education and the Board of Mass Media on the General Conference level, and that these functions be carried out by national, provincial and district conferences.
2. That the Board of Christian Literature assume these responsibilities not assumed by area conferences.

**Background and Rationale**

Following the 1978 convention, a special committee was appointed “to study the issues emerging out of conference action re. General Conference Structure.” (1981 Yearbook p. 41) This committee presented the proposals to BORAC. The result, in part, was the following recommendation to the convention in 1981:

That we delete the Board of Christian Education and the Board of Mass Media on the General Conference level. And that these functions be carried out by national, provincial and district conferences. Cooperating with programs and sharing of resources that will facilitate mutual enrichment and avoid duplication wherever possible, should be encouraged.

This recommendation was not approved for various reasons.

During the past six years BORAC has had this matter on the agenda repeatedly. Today BORAC affirms the position it took in 1981 and therefore, presents the above notice of motion.

We sense that there is a much broader readiness on the part of the conference to delete these two boards. We believe it is fair to say that both boards have struggled to define their functions and fill their roles. Their 1984 reports indicate this. BORAC, therefore, questions whether the agendas of these two boards merit General Conference board status.

There is a high degree of duplication and overlap with the work done on a national, provincial or district levels. We affirm the principles set forth in 1981: “We believe that the ministry of the church should be carried on at the level where it can best achieve its objectives. This mean that there are areas of ministry that can best be administered on a provincial or district level, and others that are best achieved if done on a broader base” (1981 Yearbook, p. 41).
The task of coordination could be done effectively through cooperation on the national levels. Certain aspects of Mass Media and production of materials can only be done on a national basis.

Production of materials could be done by an expanded Board of Christian Literature.

We believe it is time that we trim the structure of the organization of the General Conference and allow the work to be done closer to the local church.

Notice of Motion was withdrawn.

Notice of Motion #4: Board of Christian Literature (53, 83)

That the notice of motion given at the convention in 1984 to change Article XI of the Constitution of the General Conference be amended to delete Section 1-Composition and replace it with the following:

Section 1-Composition:

The board shall consist of at least nine members as follows:
Four members from each national conference and one member-at-large elected by the General Conference.
M/s/c

Notice of Motion # 6: Board of Trustees (54-55; 73)

Notice of Motion to amend the constitution: Article XV is to be revoked and the following substituted:

Board of Trustees:

Section 1-Composition
1.1 The board shall be composed of nine members.
1.2 The conference shall elect three nominees from each national conference.
1.3 The conference shall elect one additional nominee as a member-at-large of this Board.
1.4 The chairpersons of the Board of Trustees of the two national conferences shall be members of this Board by reason of such office; provided that they may be represented by their designates from time to time.
Section 2-Purpose
2.1 This Board shall act as the budgetary development and control agency of the Conference; as its legal signing authority; and as the responsible body for the administration, either directly or indirectly, of the physical assets of the Conference.

Section 3-Functions
3.1 To provide and maintain the legal status of the Conference including appointment of signing officers from time to time.
3.2 To review the budget proposals of the various individual boards and committees of the Conference and to report concerning same to the Conventions of the Conference.
3.3 To exercise a trusteeship function in respect to any board or agency of the Conference which incurs liabilities not authorized by the Conference.
3.4 To receive, administer and invest the capital, trust and endowment funds held or received by the Conference.
3.5 To delegate to the National Conference such of its functions or parts thereof as deemed expedient from time to time and to retain agents, employees or representatives to carry out such of its functions as may be expedient.

M/s/c

Notice of Motion #7: Board of Missions and Services (55, 84)

To change General Conference By-Law No.2, Article XIII, Section 1.

Section 1-Legal Status (delete this section)
The Board has acquired its own legal status by incorporating under the name “Mennonite Brethren Board of Missions and Services.” The Board of Directors of such corporation shall be comprised of the members of the Board as constituted herein. The objects and governing by-laws of such corporation shall be consistent with the Constitution of the Conference.

Rationale
The Board of Missions and Services is not incorporated as a legal entity. The General Conference corporation has its beginnings as being a corporation under the name “American Mennonite Brethren Mission Union” in 1890 and has had several amendments changing the name to its present title: “The General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.”

M/s/c
Dissolution of the Conference (55-56)

Notice and intent to amend the constitution to include the following:

The corporation of the Conference over which the Board of Trustees maintains control is organized exclusively for charitable and religious purposes, meeting the requirements for exemption provided by section 214 of the Revenue and Taxation Code, including for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law).

The property of this corporation is irrevocably dedicated to religious, charitable and educational purposes.

No part of the net earnings of the Conference corporation shall inure [sic] to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustee, officers, or other private persons, except the Conference corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth herein. No substantial part of the activities of the Corporation shall be carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the Corporation shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of these articles, the Conference corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on by a corporation exempt from Federal Income Tax under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law).

Upon the dissolution of the conference corporation, if the same shall even occur, the Board of Trustees shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all the liabilities of the corporations, dispose of all the assets of the corporation exclusively for the purposes of the Conference corporation in such a manner, or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable and religious purposes and educational purposes, meeting the requirements for exemption provided by section 214 of the Revenue and Taxation Code, as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the Board of Trustees shall determine. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by the Court of Common
Pleas of the country in which the principal office of the corporation is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organizations as the Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

**Provisional Changes (84)**

That the Convention give the Board of Trustees permission to act provisionally upon some of the changes in anticipation of final acceptance. 

**M/s/c**

**1990**

**General Conference Restructuring (27-35)**

**Assumptions**

1. We are using the current name which is the “General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches,” hereinafter referred to as the “General Conference.”

2. We affirm the ongoing need for and viability of the General Conference.

3. Appointees from national conference boards have been included on General Conference boards for purposes of program coordination. Representation of district/provincial conferences or other agencies such as MB Communications was not considered viable.

4. All Boards of the General Conference should meet at the same time and place annually to minimize costs and to maximize coordination.

5. The nomenclature “Executive Council” has been used since our constitution shall continue to read that no one person can be a member of more than one board.

6. The members of the General Conference Executive Committee are the officers of the conference and of the Executive Council. All other boards will continue to organize internally.

7. The Council of Boards, consisting of all board members, shall function as the conference in interim.

8. Dissolution of boards implies termination of staff positions. Staff of former boards are eligible for appointments, subject to the decision of the new board.

9. Elected members of dissolved boards with unexpired terms would be recognized as nominees for the new board for the sake of continuity. Members of BORAC with unexpired terms will continue as members of the Board of Faith and Life.
10. Provision has been made for appointees-at-large to boards in consideration of deficiencies or special needs that might exist in boards. Candidates for such positions are nominated by respective boards and approved by the Executive Council. Their terms expire at the end of each conference triennium. They would serve as voting members of boards.

11. The term “ex-officio” is used as defined in Article 1, Section 2 of our existing constitution. It means a person who is a member of a board by virtue of office. Such a person has the right to vote unless otherwise specified by a board.

**Restructuring Proposal**

**A. Council of Boards**

1. Rationale: At present the Board of Reference and Counsel serves as conference in interim. Since all boards of the conference will meet annually at the same time and place, it is proposed that this body serve as conference in interim.

2. Membership: Its membership shall consist of all board members. The executive officers of the General Conference shall preside over this Council.

3. Function: The Council of Boards shall meet annually for reporting and consultation. It shall function as the conference in interim.

**B. Executive Committee**

1. Structure: The Executive Committee consists of the moderator, assistant moderator and secretary. The proposed General Conference executive secretary is an ex-officio member.

2. Function: They shall serve as the executive officers of the General Conference, the Council of Boards and the Executive Council.

**C. The Executive Council**

1. Rationale: Presently BORAC is responsible both for the administration of the General Conference and for theological and ethical watch-care. We are proposing a division of functions. The new Executive Council shall administer the General Conference. They shall give leadership to and coordinate the work of the entire General Conference.

2. Structure: The Executive Council shall consist of:

   (a) The executive officers of the General Conference
   (b) The chairpersons of the boards of the General Conference;
   (c) The moderators of the national conferences
   (d) The executive secretary of the General Conference, ex-officio member.
3. Function: The Executive Council shall advise, coordinate and administer the work of the General Conference. These functions shall include: coordinating the work of boards, long-range planning, creating conference vision. Budget review, resolving tensions, custodianship of the constitution, inter-Mennonite and inter-denominational concerns, international Mennonite Brethren relations etc. The Executive Council, through the executive committee, shall plan for triennial conventions in cooperation with the convention program committee. It is responsible to the General Conference at triennial conventions.

D. Board of Faith and Life

1. Rationale: The primary functions of the Board of Faith and Life are doctrinal and ethical guidance and watch-care. Our proposal for restructuring attempts to separate these functions and the administrative functions without completely detaching them from each other.

   In our judgment, the elected conference executive officers need to remain informed and involved in these vital functions of the General Conference. We are therefore recommending that they remain as members of the board, but that the Board of Faith and Life elect its own executive from its elected members. Thus the moderator of the General Conference would not also function as chairperson of the Board of Faith and Life. This also frees the moderator to moderate the convention without also serving as spokesman for this board.

2. Structure: The Board of Faith and Life shall consist of 12 members.
   (a) Seven elected by the convention: three from Canada, three from the U.S., one member-at-large.
   (b) The General Conference executive officers: moderator, assistant moderator and secretary.
   (c) One representative from each comparable national board; The Board of Faith and Life in Canada, the Board of Church Ministries in the U.S.
   (d) General Conference Executive Secretary, ex-officio.

3. Function: This Board:
   (a) Serves as the guardian of the Confession of Faith. Any changes or modifications to the Confession of Faith must be processed through this board for presentation to the convention.
(b) Watches over the spiritual life of the General Conference and its churches and gives guidance and direction in matters of faith, doctrine and ethics. It shall, when deemed necessary, initiate appropriate action or serve as a reference body in issues of spiritual and social concern.
(c) Functions as an advisory board to national and district/provincial conferences in matters of doctrine, ethics and polity.
(d) Initiates appropriate disciplinary action when conditions contrary to the teaching of the Bible and the principles of the General Conference exist in our churches or conferences.
(e) Convenes study conferences for purposes of study and discernment on issues of faith, discipleship or polity.

E. Board of Resource Ministries

1. Rationale: The Task Force proposes the dissolution of the boards of Christian Education, Christian Literature and Mass Media, and the creation of the new board called the Board of Resource Ministries. The new board shall have a comprehensive mandate, but it is not to be assumed that all the functions of the previous boards will be continued by the new board. Dissolution implies dissolution of existing boards and staff. The new board will determine its staffing needs and will arrange for an orderly transition. The accumulated deficit of the Board of Christian Literature will not be transferred to the new board. The Conference Executive will negotiate a solution with the Board of Trustees. We believe that there is a sufficient degree of commonality in the functions of these boards to warrant this change. The executive secretary of this new board shall also be responsible for the operation of Kindred Press.

2. Structure: The Board of Resource Ministries shall consist of 10 members:

(a) Seven elected by the convention: three from Canada, three from the U.S., one member-at-large;
(b) One representative from each comparable national board: Board of Christian Education in Canada and the Board of Communications in the U.S.;
(c) One appointed-at-large;
(d) Executive Secretary of the Board of Resource Ministries, ex-officio.
3. Function: This board shall:
   (a) Monitor the churches needs for print and non-print resources in all areas of church life, worship, caring, nurture, equipping, media, evangelism, missions and historical appreciation, and to produce needed resources.
   (b) Promote, demonstrate and support the use of good resource for local churches.
   (c) Promote and distribute Mennonite Brethren produced materials to the larger Christian constituency.
   (d) Function as a networking and coordinating link between boards and national conferences in matters of resource development.
   (e) Operate Kindred Press, the publishing arm of the General Conference.

F. Seminary Board
   1. Rationale: The Task Force recommends several modifications to the Seminary Board. It is proposed that the alumni representative become a full member of the Seminary Board with full voting privileges. The term of office shall be three years, corresponding to our General Conference triennium. Furthermore, it is proposed that the current provision for the election of an additional member-at-large (existing 2.1.3) be changed to an appointee-at-large. Proposed changes to Section 4 were discussed with and agreed to by the Board of Trustees in April 1987.

   2. Structure: The Seminary Board shall consist of 12 members:
      (a) Nine elected by the convention: four from Canada, four from the U.S., one member-at-large;
      (b) One appointee-at-large.
      (c) One alumni representative, elected by the Alumni Association for a three-year term. This person shall be a voting member.
      (d) Seminary president, ex-officio.

   3. Function: Changes be made to Section 4 giving the Seminary Board full responsibility to the denomination for the operation of the seminary.
G. Board of Missions/Services

1. Rationale: The Study Commission proposes changes in board structure to reflect the growing opportunity for cross-cultural ministries in North America. Current immigration patterns and a growing foreign student population have brought our mission field to us.

To provide for greater cooperation and coordination in ministry to these people, we propose the inclusion of a representative of each of the national boards of evangelism in the Board of Missions/Services. This change also anticipates the future potential for missionary recruitment from among these groups.

2. Structure: The board shall consist of 12 members:
   (a) Nine elected by the convention: four from Canada, four from the U.S., one member-at-large.
   (b) Chairperson or designate from the Boards of Evangelism of the U.S. and Canada.
   (c) One appointee-at-large.
   (d) Executive Secretary of the Board of Missions/Services, ex-officio.

3. Function:
   (a) The Board shall be responsible for the Missions and Services program abroad.
   (b) The Board shall work in partnership with National Conferences in evangelizing ethnic minorities and international students in North America.

H. Board of Trustees

1. Rationale: The function and scope of the Board of Trustees has changed significantly over the past several years. The Board of Trustees was formerly responsible for the administration of all the monetary assets of the General Conference, which included endowment funds, annuities, deposit funds and RRSP funds. The board was also responsible to grant loans to churches and conferences agencies. All these functions have been transferred to the respective boards of management of Canada and the United States Conferences.

While acknowledging these changes, the Task Force still sees a significant role for this board in overseeing the total financial operation of the General Conference. Accountability through elected representation must be retained. Objectivity in protecting the interests of the General Conference must be guarded. Consistency in General Conference representation during
any given triennium must be guaranteed. Considering all these factors we propose the following changes in structure.

2. Structure: The Board of Trustees shall consist of nine members:
   (a) Three elected by the convention: one from Canada, one from the U.S., one member-at-large. These three elected officers shall constitute the executive;
   (b) Four national representatives: the chairperson and assistant chairperson of the Canadian Board of Management and the chairperson and assistant chairperson of the U.S. Board of Trustees;
   (c) General Conference treasurers from the U.S. and Canada, ex-officio.

3. Function: The Board of Trustees shall:
   (a) Provide and maintain the legal status of the conference, including appointment of signing officers;
   (b) Review the budget proposals of various individual boards and committees of the conference prior to presentation to the Executive Council;
   (c) Exercise a trusteeship function in respect to all boards or agencies of the conference which incur liabilities not authorized by the conference;
   (d) Establish appropriate liaison with all boards so as to be informed of the financial operations of the total conference;
   (e) Delegate to the national conferences such of its functions or parts thereof as deemed expedient from time to time and to retain agents, employees or representatives to carry out such of its functions as may be expedient.
   (f) Prepare the budget for the General Conference triennium.

I. Conference Executive Secretary

1. Rationale: The Study Commission proposes the appointment of a General Conference executive secretary. Under the proposed structure, this person would serve as an appointed executive officer of the Executive Council and as an ex-officio member of the Board of Faith and Life. The executive secretary would be an appointee of the Executive Council, and would be made available to the Board of Faith and Life for special assignments. The workload of the executive secretary would be monitored by the Executive Committee, to whom this person would also be accountable. Reasons for this proposal include:
(a) Administrative load: We have evaluated the workload of the executive, particularly the moderator, and believe that the demands of work and time on an elected executive are excessive.

(b) Vision and unity: The conference would be helped by a person who embodies and articulates a Mennonite Brethren identity and vision in our constituency.

(c) Coordination and communication: More consistent coordination and communication between the executive and boards of the conference, and between the General Conference and national and district/provincial conferences should be achieved through an executive secretary.

(d) Listening and liaison: An executive secretary would work from an office and be freer to travel, therefore more accessible. He would function both as a listener and as a liaison person between the General Conference and the larger constituency.

(e) Faith and Life: The executive secretary would be significantly involved in processing matters of faith and life. Understanding and articulating conference doctrinal and ethical positions would be a significant component of the assignment.

2. Proposed job description:

(a) Serve as the executive officer of the Executive Council with direct and indirect responsibilities:
   (i) stimulate vision for the Executive Council in its leadership role in the conference
   (ii) assist the conference moderator in preparing agenda and planning meetings
   (iii) enable the Executive Council to fulfill its mission
   (iv) coordinate the work of the Executive Council
   (v) implement actions
   (vi) prepare Executive Council budget;
   (vii) coordinate plans for and administer triennial conventions

(b) Assist the Executive Committee in representing them.
   (i) at national and provincial/district conferences
   (ii) in local churches that request council and input
(iii) at inter-Mennonite, interdenominational, and international meetings.
(c) Facilitate communication and coordination for the Executive Committee with the constituency through:
   (i) consultation with national, provincial/district leadership and conference ministers
   (ii) liaison with conference boards
   (iii) identification of church/conference issues and concerns
   (iv) articulation of church/conference vision.
(d) Assist the Board of Faith and Life
   (i) by serving as an ex-officio member of the board
   (ii) by undertaking special assignments on behalf of this board
   (iii) by preparing the Board of Faith and Life budget.
M/s/c that it be accepted and implemented provisionally.
M/s/c to approve the Restructuring Proposal as presented.
Some opposition.

1990

Conference Name Change (108-109)

Preamble: At the 1987 General Conference convention the Board of Reference and Counsel gave notice of motion regarding a name change for the General Conference. Such a change would involve a change to the constitution and thus needed to be proposed first as a notice of motion, and now as a recommendation. The rationale for this proposal was three-fold: (See Yearbook of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1987, pp.51-52)

1. Deleting the term “General Conference” would eliminate the present confusion with the General Conference Mennonite Church.
2. Our name should reflect the fact that we are the Mennonite Brethren Church in North America. The present official name, since 1963, is General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches. We should make the North American designation explicit to avoid confusion with other national conferences of Mennonite Brethren.
3. Our name should be consistent with and reflect our theology
of church. There are two important related changes being proposed: changing the plural “churches” to the singular “church,” and deleting the designation “conference” in favor of the singular “church.” This would accent our conviction that we are a single covenant community rather than a loosely bound association of local churches.

It is for these three reasons that the Board of Reference and Counsel recommends the following:

1. The official name of the “General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches” be changed to “Mennonite Brethren Church of North America.”

2. For the sake of consistency, and in recognition of the rationale summarized above, the national, district and provincial conferences of North America, where necessary, voluntarily consider the feasibility of adjusting their own official names to reflect the designation of the “Mennonite Brethren Church of North America,” for example, the “Mennonite Brethren Church in Manitoba.”

M/s/c to refer the issue to BORAC (Board of Faith and Life).

1993 (9)

That the Executive Committee (Moderator, Assistant Moderator, Secretary) be deleted from membership in the Board of Faith and Life. In place of the Executive Committee, one additional member at large shall be elected to the Board of Faith and Life, and one member of the Executive Committee shall serve as an ex-officio member of the Board.

Rationale
The reality of the workload experienced during this triennium, coupled with the need to expand the Executive Committee’s liaison function among the boards, is the basis for this recommendation.

M/s/c

1993 (9)

Notice of Motion: That the Constitution and By-laws of the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches (specifically By-law No. 2, “General By-law Governing the Affairs of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches”) shall be amended to accurately reflect the structural changes accepted by the 1990 convention. These proposed changes
are specified in a newly revised draft submitted to each local church for purposes of review and discussion.

Rationale: The current (new) structure of the General Conference was accepted by the 1990 convention with the proviso that the Executive Council would review and amend the By-laws during the triennium in order to reflect composition of boards and the terms of board members and generally to “fine tune” the functions of the boards.

M/s/c

MBMS Board Membership (10)

To create the correct number of members, balance in terms of office, and continuity in boards, the following action was recommended: That the present chairman (US rep) and the present Vice-Chair (Canadian rep) of the Board of Missions/Services be appointed as members of the Board for a two-year term (until 1995).

M/s/c

1995

Change of Name (9; 87)

Moved that the name of the Conference be changed to “The Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.” (The word “General” would be deleted.)

Revised notice of motion: That the name of the Conference be changed to North American Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.
No action was taken on the name change motion.

1995 (9)

Notice of Motion: Moved that the Articles of Incorporation (charter) be revised to ensure the legal continuance of the General Conference in perpetuity. (The present charter expires legally in 1999 and according to the bylaws must be presented and then voted on one convention later: 1997.)
Notice of Motion: Moved to authorize the Board of Trustees to rewrite the language of the Articles of Incorporation in contemporary English.

**By-laws (87)**
The Executive Council recommends that the revised By-laws which were provisionally accepted in 1993 in Winnipeg be approved (see Exhibit II for the revised Bylaws).

M/s/c

1997 (36-37)

Revised Recommendation

[Editorial Note: The original motion 1B on p. 8 was not acted on].

We recommend the striking of a Task Force of three people (one each appointed by national leadership and the chair by Executive Council) to facilitate a “no-holds-barred” review in consultation with existing ministries, all levels of conference and local churches; to prepare an appropriate realignment/restructuring of the management of our ministries; to provide opportunity for strengthening our relationship with the other national Mennonite Brethren conferences; and to complete their assignment within this biennium by 1) preparing an interim report to Council of Boards for Sept./Oct.1998, and 2) bringing a recommendation for Executive Council for March 1999.

M/s/c to amend the motion so that the task force be enlarged to five people.

M/s/c to accept the recommendation as amended.

1997

**Constitutional Change (7-8; 56-58; 92; 94-96)**

[Editorial Note: The minutes in the Yearbook are unclear as to the precise nature of the final bylaw revisions acted on at the Convention.]

1. In response to the mandate for change, in consideration of the processing of the past biennium, and in anticipation of the dissolution of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, we recommend:

   (1) That we adjust the Amendment by-law to allow us to suspend or waive any by-law provision by a two-thirds vote of the delegates.
M/s/c

(2) That the Executive Council initiate the process of realigning and restructuring the management of the ministries of our bi-national conference.

[Editorial Note: It appears that this item was not voted on.]

(3) That we suspend elections for the next term except to fill vacant positions.
M/s/c

(4) That we adjust the by-law which governs the Amendment of the Charter and the Confession of Faith to allow us to accept the completed and properly processed revision of the MB Confession of Faith at the next conventions. (This would eliminate the “Notice of Motion” requirement.)
[Editorial Note: It appears that this item was not voted on.

2. We recommend that the composition of the Board of Trustees be reduced from nine members to five members. (This is the result of eliminating the two representatives from the Canadian Conference Board of Management and the two representatives from the U.S. Conference Board of Trustees.)
M/s/c

Rationale for the proposed amendments to the General Conference by-laws:

Article XIII: Board of Trustees
With a significantly reduced agenda and to reduce travel expenses, the Board of Trustees recommends that the size of the board be reduced from nine (9) to five (5) members by eliminating the Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively, of the national boards of Trustees/Management from the General Conference Board of Trustees.

Article XV: Amendments
In anticipation of the possible dissolution of the General Conference, by-laws should be amended to allow revisions to the Charter and Confession of Faith at the same convention where they are introduced, to enable action to be taken at both the 1997 and 1999 conventions on these documents.

We also need a by-law to allow us to waive or suspend provisions that would prevent actions from being taken, and to allow us to suspend election procedures and term limits at the 1997 convention.

Current Article XIII: Board of Trustees

Section 1-Composition
A. The Board shall consist of 9 members:
   1. Three members elected by the conference: one from Canada, one from the United States, and one member elected at large
   2. Four national representatives: the chairperson and assistant chairperson or designates of the Canadian Board of Management and the chairperson and assistant chairperson or designates of the U.S. Board of Trustees
   3. General Conference treasurers from the United States and Canada (ex-officio).

**Proposed Article XIII: Board of Trustees**

Section 1-Composition

A. The Board shall consist of 5 members:
   1. Three members elected by the Conference: one from Canada, one from the United States, and one member elected at large
   2. The national treasurers of the United States and Canadian conferences (ex-officio).

**Current Article XV: Amendment**

Section 1-Charter and Confession of Faith

The Charter and Confession of Faith may be amended by the following procedure:
   1. Notice of proposed amendment shall be given at the Convention of the Conference.
   2. At least two months prior to the next Convention, the Secretary shall submit the proposed amendment to the churches for discussion.
   3. At the next Convention, the proposed amendment shall be put to a vote and shall become effective if at least two-thirds of the delegates present vote in favor.
   4. If carried, the amendment shall become effective as follows:
      a) Amendments to the Charter shall become effective in accordance with existing laws applicable from time to time
      b) Amendments to the Confession of Faith shall become effective immediately

Section 2: General By-law

The General By-law governing the Conference affairs may be amended at any convention, subject to the following procedure:
2.1 Notice of the proposed amendment shall be presented to the Executive Council as early as possible for consideration.
2.2 At least two months prior to the next Convention, the Secretary shall submit the proposed amendment to the churches for discussion.
2.3 At the next Convention, the proposed amendment shall be put to a vote and shall become effective if at least two-thirds of the delegates present vote in favor.
2.4 If carried, the amendment shall become effective immediately.

Proposed Article XV: Revision and Suspension

Section 1-Amendment

The Charter (Articles of Incorporation), the Confession of Faith, and the General By-law governing the Conference affairs, may be amended at any convention, subject to the following procedure:

1. Notice of the proposed amendment shall be presented to the Executive Council as early as possible for consideration.
2. At least two months prior to the Convention, the Secretary shall submit the proposed amendment to the churches for discussion.
3. At the Convention, the proposed amendment shall be put to a vote and shall become effective if at least two-thirds of the delegates present vote in favor.
4. If carried, the amendment shall become effective as follows:
   a) Amendments to the Charter shall become effective in accordance with existing laws applicable from time to time
   b) Amendments to the Confession of Faith and the General By-law shall become effective immediately.

Section 2-Suspension or Waiver

The General By-law governing the Conference affairs may be suspended or any provision thereof may be waived by at least a two-thirds vote of delegates present and voting at any convention.

M/s/c to amend the motion to read 4 months instead of 2 months.
M/s/c to revise the by-law to read “At the Convention, the proposed amendment shall be put to a vote and shall become effective if supported by at least two-thirds of the delegates present and voting.”
(Motion passed by a voice vote with a few opposing votes.)

1999
Dissolution of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches in North America (9)

**Revised Recommendations: Divestiture of the Ministries of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches in North America (11-12; 45, 47; 71-72)**

1. That the General Conference Executive Committee, together with the General Conference Board of Trustees, negotiate with the United States and Canadian Conferences to accomplish the transfer of all General Conference ministries and bi-national projects to the two national conferences on or before May 1, 2002.

**Further Revised Recommendation #1:**

1. That the General Conference divest itself of the ministries it currently holds subject to the acceptance of a transfer plan by the Canadian and U.S. Conferences, and that the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees be authorized to negotiate with the ministries and Conferences using the following schedule as a guideline:

   1999-MBMSI
   2000-BFL
   2001-BRM
   2002-MBBS

   Ballots were cast on the recommendation.

   **M/s/c** Yes=76%, No=24%.

2. That, upon transfer of the ministries to the national conference, the Board of Trustees determine the appropriate action to be taken with regard to the General Conference corporation and any related corporations, and file all legal documents necessary to accomplish such action. In so doing, the Board of Trustees shall be empowered to take action otherwise reserved to the convention by the General Conference By-laws.

**Rationale:** This gives the BOT the authority to file papers on behalf of the corporation, and if needed, to take action on issues related to matters overseas. It also allows the BOT to revise the by-laws if the corporation continues, as may be necessary. Currently, by-law changes require a two-thirds vote in convention.

**M/s/c**
3. That, after payment of all debts and liabilities, and disposable property and assets currently held by the General Conference and any property and assets designated for the benefit of the General Conference in the future, be transferred to the ministry for whose benefit they are designated. If there is no such designation, the property and assets shall be distributed as follows:
   -property and assets originating in Canada to the Canadian Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America;
   -property and assets originating in the U.S. to the Mennonite Brethren Foundation;
   -property and assets originating in any other country as determined by the Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees shall have the responsibility for making all such transfers and distributions and shall do so in a fair and equitable manner and in consultation with the national conferences and/or any affected ministry.

**Rationale:** This action reflects much of what has been previously done in divesting assets to the national conferences at previous conventions.

M/s/c


Rationale: It requires a two-thirds vote to suspend the convention.

M/s/c

5. That the terms of all members of General Conference boards and committees in effect following the 1999 convention continue until the transfer of the ministry of the board or committee to the national conferences.

**Rationale:** To prevent a limitation on terms in case boards need to continue.

M/s/c

1999

**Articles of Incorporation (70-71)**

That Article Four of the Articles of Incorporation (Charter) of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches be amended to read as follows: “The term for which this corporation is to exist is perpetual.”

M/s/c

1999

**Recommendation for Restructuring (102)**

[Editorial Note: Exhibit C on p. 102 appears not to have been acted on.]
We recommend the striking of a task force of five people (one each appointed by national leadership boards, and three, including the chair, by the executive council):

- to facilitate a no-holds-barred review in consultation with existing ministries, all levels of conference and local churches;
- to prepare an appropriate realignment/restructuring of the management of our ministries;
- to provide opportunity for strengthening our relationships with the other national Mennonite Brethren conferences; and
- to complete their assignment within this biennium by:

2. Bring a recommendation for Executive Council for March, 1999
9. Executive Committee (Conference Executive)

[Editorial Note: See also Constitution]

1999 (6)

M/s/c That all published reports and recommendations be considered moved and seconded by their respective boards.
10. Executive Council

[Editorial Note: See also Constitution.]

1993

Executive Secretary (10)

That Marvin Hein be asked to continue as Executive Secretary in a one-half-time assignment for the next biennium (through the 1995 General Conference convention). He remains accountable to the Executive Committee.

Rationale

The Executive Secretary is the only staff person employed by the General Conference; he serves both the Board of Faith and Life and the Executive Council in a much needed administrative function, and he is available in the wider constituency of the General Conference for church ministry.

M/s/c

1995

Executive Secretary (57)

The extension of the term of the executive secretary for two years, 1995-97.

M/s/c

Logo (9)

Acceptance of a new conference logo.

[Editorial Note: This recommendation appears not to have been acted on.]

1997

Service and Recognition Policy (8; 56)

We recommend that the Service and Recognition Policy be adopted. The recommendation was withdrawn.
2002

**Divestiture and Merger**
To approve the Plan and Agreement of Merger (Item 1) and the Action of the Executive Council of the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches (Item 4—attached hereto). (75)

M/s/c

11. Historical Commission


1984

Governance/Relationships (109-110; 125)

A proposal for realigning the relationships between the Historical Commission of the General Conference; the Center of Mennonite Brethren Studies, Fresno, Calif.; and the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary.

A. Background: Existing Relationships
1. The Historical Commission is a sub-committee of the Board of Christian Literature. Its members are appointed by BCL subject to conference ratification.
2. The Center for MB Studies, Fresno, is the General Conference (GC) archival depository. It is administered by a separate board that is appointed by and is accountable to the Seminary board.

B. Recommendation: Proposed Relationships
1. It is proposed that the Historical Commission be a sub-committee of the Seminary board. Its members are to be appointed by the seminary board subject to conference ratification. Its memberships would be constituted as presently; two members from Canada; two members from the U.S.A. and one at large member.
2. The Center for MB Studies (Fresno) as the GC archival depository would be administered by the Historical Commission together with the Seminary. The commission would offer policy and development guidance. The administration of the Center would remain under the preview of the Seminary and Seminary board.

C. Rationale for the change:
1. It would more closely link and consolidate the work of the GC body concerned with historical concerns and the GC archival institution. At present the two entities have no formal linkage but are engaged in similar tasks.
2. It would recognize the substantial success of the Historical Commission in gathering the conference archival material and the need for its function to include oversight of the archival program of preservation and the continual
updating of conference materials. It would render obsolete the somewhat artificial distinction between the gathering and maintaining functions. The two are in fact linked together and a single structure would enhance the function of both.

3. The GC archival center needs to be linked to an academic institution. Centers that are not linked to academic communities become marginal to the life of a people. Since it would seem unwise to unlink the center from the seminary, it seems more advisable to link the Historical Commission and the archival center together and to make both responsible to the GC through the seminary boards.

4. Providing the Fresno center with direct linkage to the conference through the Historical Commission would parallel the structure existing in Canada between its archival center and the Canadian Conference. A modified linkage exists in the U.S.A. between the conference and its center in Hillsboro, Kans., in that there is no structural tie but there is a financial commitment of the national conference to that center.

M/s/c

That the Historical Commission, together with its budget, be transferred to the jurisdiction of the Seminary Board of the General Conference. This recommendation will be dealt with later.

[Editorial Note: This recommendation appears not to have been dealt with separately but may have been part of the recommendation to accept the Seminary budget.]

Wahrheitsfreund Index (125)

The Historical Commission was granted $2,400 a year for three years to index the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren periodicals, Wahrheitsfreund.

M/s/c

1987

The Mennonite Brethren Church: A Missionary Movement (132)

Approval of the specified funding of $20,000 for the third film in “the Mennonite Brethren Church: A Missionary Movement” series.

M/s/c
Deposit of Archival Records

We recognize that positions and service on conference boards, agencies, and committees is a trust that carries with it the obligation that the materials received or generated during the term of service be retained for posterity. The records of all conference agencies should be privately retained only so long as the individual actively serves in the conference position. When these materials become inactive, in the sense that the individual no longer serves in that position, they should be transferred to the official conference archives at the Center for MB Studies (Fresno). Work done for the conference (even though it is done on a voluntary basis and in scattered offices and homes) remains the property of the conference.

M/s/c

Cloud of Witnesses (132)

We recognize the Cloud of Witnesses as a General conference endowment program and endorse and encourage its active development.

M/s/c

1993

Congregational Heritage Preservation (52)

That the Conference affirm the “Congregational Heritage Preservation” program and encourage congregations to work with the Commission towards the systematic preservation of their local records.

M/s/c

1995

Congregational Representatives (77)

That the General Conference endorse the Historical Commission’s plan that congregations in North America appoint a congregational representative to work with the Commission as a liaison in the collection and preservation of congregational materials. The Commission further requests that the name of this individual be forwarded to the Historical Commission office at the Seminary by September 30, 1995.

M/s/c
12. Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary


1978

Location (167)

That the Seminary remain at its present location in Fresno, California.
Accepted

Expansion (167-168)

That the Conference approve a campus expansion program, funded entirely by voluntary donations, consisting of the following:

Phase I: An addition to the Hiebert Library consisting of approximately 6,000 square feet, at an approximate cost of $300,000, including furnishings. The addition to the library includes space for books, archives, and the Center for Mennonite Brethren studies plus additional study space.
Accepted

Phase II: Construction of a classroom student center wing consisting of approximately 9,000 square feet to be added to the south end of the Seminary/Conference Building at an approximate cost of $360,000.
Accepted

Construction of each phase will begin when 75% of the estimated cost of the respective phases is available in cash or pledges. Therefore, building will progress as funds and pledges are made available.

1981

Phase II (95)

That this convention reaffirm its 1978 authorization enabling the seminary to proceed with Phase 2 of the campus development plan.
M/s/c
Center for Training in Mission/Evangelism (126-28)

That the Mennonite Brethren Conference establish a Center for Training in Missions/Evangelism to be located at our Seminary.

Projections For A Center in Training In Missions/Evangelism

The Seminary Board of Directors proposes the establishment of a Center For Training In Missions/Evangelism at the Seminary. In broad stroke this Center will be a vehicle to coordinate field training in evangelism in urban and cross cultural settings, to engage in mission research and to be a resource for agencies of our Conference and for churches.

Background and Rationale:

1. Mission/Evangelism for the Next Decade(s)
   From the first the Seminary has had a strong missionary commitment. The Board of Education in session in Hillsboro, Feb. 1955, implemented the establishment of the Seminary by setting out three programs of study, the first two of which were:

   (1) a two-year course with a major in Missions leading to the “Masters in Religious Education”
   (2) a three-year course with a major in Evangelism, leading to the Bachelor of Divinity.

   Dr. G.W. Peters, Dr. J.B. Toews and Dr. Paul Hiebert have served as Mission Professors. Dr. Hans Kasdorf came as fulltime Mission Professor in 1978 and was soon joined by Dr. H.J. Schmidt.

   The proposed Center could assist in mobilizing a mission commitment in our brotherhood similar to the way in which the Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies has given a fresh and highly beneficial historical consciousness.

2. The Bible and Mission at the Seminary
   A scriptural mandate for the church to engage in mission is non-negotiable. Mission/evangelism pulsates through the curriculum now. However, special resourcing through the Center would further
stimulate mission studies. The Center could also be a “laboratory” for channeling mission efforts in conjunction with academic study.

3. Mission in Constituency and the Seminary
   A random questionnaire submitted to approximately 30 churches with almost 200 responses asked for reaction to the comment, “The Seminary should lay greater stress on mission.” The vast majority of respondents agree. However, only 47% of those aged 20-29 agree. The concern for mission must receive greater visibility. A Center would also serve helpfully as a resource for the churches.

4. Mission/Evangelism and the Conference Agencies
   For more than two years the Seminary Board has weighed the advisability of establishing such a Center. In the winter of 1983 the Seminary convened a consultation of denominational leaders and representatives from the Board of Missions/Services and Boards of Evangelism in the United States and Canada. The board of Missions/Services at its April 1984 meeting fully endorsed the current recommendation.

The Focus of the Center

The Center For Training in Missions/Evangelism would have the following assignment:

1. Training in Mission through education/experience. The Center would coordinate “field” experiences for mission/church planting trainees. Such experience would take place in urban and cross-cultural settings. The Seminary is not a mission agency but a Center would coordinate academic and field education. For years BOMAS and the Seminary have offered a Church Mission Institute.
2. Research. M.B. approaches to missions/evangelism in urban settings and elsewhere could be vastly improved by some analysis of response patterns and strategies. Moreover sophisticated research by others needs to be “digested” and made available to Boards who work with policies and personnel.
3. Motivation and Inspiration. The missionary vision needs to be spelled out and the encouragement of pastors and leaders needs to be ongoing. Through workshops and conferences, lectureships and demonstrations, the mission interest could be fostered. The Center would network with similar centers elsewhere in the conference.
4. Consultation. The Center would serve with consulting teams to assist churches in evangelism and church planting, and work with BOMAS in orienting and updating missionaries, both new and those on leave.

Organization of the Center

1. The Center would be organized as an incorporated entity at the Seminary, governed by an advisory group of six-members to be appointed by Seminary Board of Directors.
2. The Center would be administered by a Director appointed by the Seminary Board of Directors on recommendation from the Center advisory group.
3. The Director, with faculty status, would be engaged for the first year(s) on a one-third load. Space for the Director and/or space for materials would be provided by the Seminary.
4. The funding for the start of the Center would be modest - $5,000.00 has been allocated provisionally in the 1984-85 budget. Subsequent funding in the next year or two is envisioned as $15,000.00

Recommendation

Whereas, in addition to the reasons cited above as rationale, the Mennonite Brethren Conference is observing its centennial in missions, and
Whereas, the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary now in its 30th year wishes to contribute significantly to the ongoing impetus of reaching men and women for Jesus Christ,

Be it resolved that the Mennonite Brethren Conference convening at Reedley, California establish a Center For Training In Missions/Evangelism to be located at the Seminary in Fresno and charged with the responsibilities as outlined above.
M/s/c.

1987

Mission Statement (142)

That the Mission Statement of the Seminary receive affirmation.
M/s/c
[Editorial Note: For Mission Statement see pp. 140-142 in 1987 Yearbook.]
Student Aid Endowment (143)

That a Student Aid Endowment of $5,000,000 be established for the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary. The earnings of the endowment will be designated as aid for students to assist with educational costs.
M/s/c

1993

Subsidy (51-52)

That subject to the approval of the Conference Executive boards by the National Conferences, each National Conference adjust its Seminary subsidy contribution by $10,000 each year (Canada up, US down) until it reaches parity per member distribution, with the provision that neither Conference contribution shall exceed 60%.
M/s/c

That the Subsidy Task Force proposal be ratified, and become effective in 1993-94.
M/s/c

1995

New Seminary subsidy arrangement (9; 78)

The following proposals for revised funding are being suggested:
   a. That we affirm continued support of the Canadian and US conferences for a unified seminary.
   b. That the local guarantee subsidy provided by the national conferences be increased to $635,000 for fiscal year 1995-1996 and be fixed at that amount for subsequent years.
   c. That we continue to work toward a 60/40 ratio of Canadian/US subsidy support.
   d. That an exchange rate of a minimum of $0.82 be accepted for Canadian funds and phased in over a three-year period beginning fiscal year 1996-1997.
   e. That beginning in fiscal year 1996-1997, the Canadian Conference fund one-half of a full-time seminary fund-raiser position, similar to the position already established in the United States, to promote the seminary commitment in Canada and to raise funds for the seminary programs.
f. That this agreement shall be subject to review in or after FY 2000-2001, such review being called by the General Conference executive or upon notification of either partner of this agreement.

M/s/c with several dissenting votes.

Board Membership (10; 77)

That the number of directors on the Board of the MB Biblical Seminary be increased by the appointment of four additional members.
M/s/c There were several dissenting votes.

1999

Seminary Direction (21-22)

We recommend that the General Conference affirm the current direction being pursued by MBBS—“one seminary with three primary locations” plus extension via Internet and regional “suit-cased” courses taught by MBBS faculty. We also recommend that the Canadian and United States Conferences at their conventions in 2000 discuss, discern and affirm some model of ongoing bi-national theological training beyond 2002.

[Editorial Note: This Recommendation appears not to have been acted on.]
13. Other

- Convention Scheduling

1993 (8)

That the convention of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren churches be held every two years.

**Rationale:** The proposal to move the General Conference convention cycle from a three-year to a two-year format was initiated within the Canadian Conference in order to strengthen and expedite the programs and work of the General Conference. Accelerating response time to major issues (e.g., Confession of faith, By-laws, etc.) is perceived as important in the context of our new structure and an expanding Conference. The proposal has been positively endorsed by both national conferences. It now must be ratified by the churches in convention at the General Conference.

**M/s/c**

1999 (72)

**M/s/c** by a strong show of hands that the two national Executive Committees be strongly encouraged to plan periodic conventions for purposes such as celebration, fellowship, Bible study, or business, etc.

- Mennonite World Conference

1978

**General Council Members**

That our present members Marvin Hein, J. A. Toews and Edmund Janzen continue to serve during the next interim.

**Carried**
14. Convention Resolutions

1978 (203-205)

1. Introduction and recognition of host churches

One hundred years ago a sincere yet small group of Mennonite Brethren Christians from several states came together for the first time in North America to share their common bond in Christ’s mission as their mission in a newly emerging brotherhood in America.

Now, one century later, we, as Mennonite Brethren have again gathered to consider the meaning of making Christ’s mission our mission for our generation during the 54th Conference on M.B. Churches in North America.

Our assembling together for meaningful fellowship, inspirational encouragement and brotherhood discernment has been facilitated by the generous and genuine hospitality of the Buhler, Kansas congregation, one of our historic Mennonite Brethren Churches, which was organized in 1878, 100 years ago this year.

In order to meet in conjunction with the Mennonite World Conference in Wichita, Kansas last week, the Buhler congregation courageously and graciously invited us to their community on short notice. Their spirit of sharing and warmth has been most gracious and accommodating as they have hosted our convention.

We hereby resolve to express our heartfelt appreciation to the Buhler congregation, their pastoral leadership and the neighboring congregations who so adequately and faithfully hosted our 54th Conference of the M.B. Churches in North America.

2. Leadership in the conference:

The 54th Convention of the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church meeting in Buhler, Kansas, was blessed of God in the provision of spiritual leadership. Their leadership resulted in both direction and motion. The direction in which they have pointed is that Christ’s mission is indeed our mission. The resolution which they brought forward was intended to produce the motion.

Be it resolved that we thank God for His gifts of leadership to our conference. Be it also resolved that we express our thanks to the members of the conference executive, the members of the conference Boards and Committees that have served us. We echo the thought expressed in Romans 1:8 “I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world.”
3. Messages by the Brethren J.A. Toews, Elmer Martens, Waldo Hiebert, Hugo Jantz and others.

The clear, forceful keynote address by our Brother moderator and the instructive and practical devotional messages given by Brother Elmer Martens served very effectively to focus our attention on the great theme of the conference “Christ’s Mission-Our Mission” as well as the devotional message Sunday. Jesus Christ was lifted up as we worshipped Him and heard Him give us direction for our conference efforts and our individual lives.

Be it therefore resolved that we express our deep gratitude and appreciation to our brothers who served so well with their ministry.


We are indeed privileged to be identified and commissioned as among “The Sent-Ones of Christ.” We are humbly grateful for the evident blessing of varied ministries, both in North America and world-wide.

We have been enriched by the presence of fraternal visitors from abroad and have been encouraged by their testimonial report and challenge.

We have been exhorted to be Christ’s Kind of Sent-Ones and to be responsive to His Model of servanthood.

Therefore, be it resolved that we re-affirm our commitment to the mandate of Christ’s mission being our mission.

We re-dedicate ourselves to carrying out that mandate through the multiple ministries of our brotherhood, even as expressed by the actions of this Convention. We recognize anew our dependence upon the grace of God and the enabling of His Spirit for the fulfilling of our assignment.

M/s/c

1981 (162)

Celebrating the call of God has been an enriching experience for the delegates and guests of the 55th Convention of the Mennonite Brethren Churches. We are grateful to God and the many people He has used to help us celebrate. Be it resolved that we commit ourselves to obedience to the call of God through His Word as it comes to us as various times and through different means.

Our response to the call of God has been evidenced in the many ministries the Lord has entrusted to us. We have been greatly encouraged by the good reports presented by the Boards of our conference.

We acknowledge with praise and gratitude what God has done through faithful brothers and sisters as they have carried out the mandate of their respective boards.
Be it resolved that we dedicate ourselves anew to God for service and to faithful intercession for those whom we have entrusted with the responsibilities of our conference ministries.

We celebrate the call of God in our lives through the love and unity that have been evident among us. We have again seen the brotherhood at work. The Lord has given us a spirit of openness and liberty. We have spoken the truth in love. We have had the freedom to question and to reject what we felt was not right. We have been able to disagree in love.

Be it resolved therefore, that we stand united on the decisions that we have made; that we inform our brothers and sisters in our churches of these decisions, and that we commit ourselves together with them to abide by these decisions and initiate change if needed through the appropriate channels.

The Ontario Conference and the host churches have helped us in our celebration by their love and generous hospitality. We recognize that hosting a convention such as this is no small task. Our hosts have done an excellent job. They have made our stay and our work here enjoyable. We thank God for the many people who gave of themselves and served us so faithfully.

Be it resolved that we thank our brothers and sisters and that we wish them God’s blessing in their daily walk with God and in their future ministry.

Be it resolved that we submit ourselves to pray for one another and to pray for revival in our brotherhood.

M/s/c

1984 (147-48)

Today we humbly stand before our God and acknowledge His faithfulness. We came together to celebrate one hundred years of Mennonite Brethren missions. That we have done with grateful hearts and voice to God who made it all possible. We will not forget the powerful and moving experience of the procession of those who served in the mission we came to celebrate.

Today we stand together resolved to continue in the mission and to cause that procession of people to continue to grow until the whole world has heard the gospel of peace.

We came to celebrate because the gospel is growing and this has been evidenced through the many ministries the Lord has entrusted to us. We have been encouraged by the good reports presented by the Boards of our conference. We acknowledge with gratitude what the Lord has accomplished through faithful brothers and sisters as they served in their assignments.

Through our experiences of celebration we have dedicated ourselves anew to our Lord and to the mission He has called us to carry out. We resolve
to be faithful, both in service ourselves and in intercession for those whom we have asked to give leadership in conference ministries.

Our time of celebration has indeed been an expression of love and unity that God by His Spirit has given to us. The brotherhood has been at work. Even in diversity we have expressed unity and in disagreement, love. We resolve therefore, to grow in love and unity and stand united in the decisions we have made.

Our hosts, the people of the Reedley Mennonite Brethren Church have helped us greatly in making our time of celebration possible. We acknowledge their love, hospitality and generous spirit. We thank God for people whose hearts are open to the needs and concerns of others. God will not forget their labor of love. We leave here enriched by the beauty of their lives and the faithfulness of their service.

In our celebration we have come to understand afresh that to be honored by the Lord and appointed by Him is indeed no small thing.

We resolve, therefore, to appropriate the grace of God and the lessons taught by god’s servants at this convocation and dedicate ourselves to walk with our god, to serve Him faithfully, to pray for one another, to pray for renewal, and to carry out the gospel known everywhere until the hope of Christ’s coming is fulfilled.

On your behalf I would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks and appreciation to our moderator Brother Henry H. Dick.

1987 (144)

Our conference focused on glory to Christ in the church. Let us thank God for the gifted persons He sent among us. They have drawn our hearts toward repentance, called us to commitment and change, and focused our worship.

Let us thank God for the progression, even in our worship and our deliberations. The full range of our Christian commitment was covered in various ways through the flow of the conference. We moved from brokenness to energy, to a commitment to the person of Christ. We were called to remove the barriers that separate us from each other. In the midst of a strong call to integrity and faithfulness, we listened to each other. While we expressed sharp disagreements, pastoral concern emerged.

Let us pray and diligently work to have the peace-making which we confess to the world also characterize our walk with each other. May the God of peace who calls us into one body also sanctify our work with each other in that body.
We praise God for leaders who call us to the vision of evangelism, church planting, missionary expansion and the calling out of workers. Let us pray and sacrifice to demonstrate our response to that call.

Let us also thank God for diligent workers and pleasant accommodations. Our task was helped enormously by our host churches and the people of this area.

M/s/c

1990 (127-28)

From the 58th General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches the following might be an expression of our responsibility as Christian in this world of unrest.

1. Be it resolved that we encourage and stimulate our churches to continue to call people from all people groups to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. We rejoice in the presence of several delegates at this conference from our international community of Mennonite Brethren.

2. Be it resolved that we stimulate each other to live a Christ-like lifestyle in a world filled with violence, abuse and strife. This lifestyle reflects the dramatic change that God has brought to each of us through His grace, mercy and peace.

3. Be it resolved that we commit ourselves in unity to pray for each other, that we may be filled with the Spirit of God’s power to carry out the Biblical agenda for the church as articulated in the Vision Statement.

4. We acknowledge that God hears and responds to the prayers of his faithful people. Therefore, be it resolved that we commit ourselves to prayer for the leaders of our nations as they seek solutions to the problems of a complex world. Further, be it resolved that our conference leaders communicate this commitment to the appropriate government officials of our respective nations.

5. Be it resolved that we affirm the leadership of our conference in their stance of flexibility, sensitivity, and willingness to model a spirit of submissiveness as displayed in our business proceedings. Be it further resolved to call each of us to follow Jesus in carrying (transmitting) such a spirit of mutual submission to our congregations.

6. Be it resolved that we recognize and express appreciation to those who have served faithfully and completed their leadership roles in our General Conference. These individuals are Herb Brandt (24 years), Waldo Hiebert (36 years), David Ewert (21 years), and Clarence Hiebert (30 years). They represent a combined ministry of 111 years of service. We affirm with the
Board of Trustees their appreciation for the more than 10 years of dedicated service of Marvin Reimer. We pray God’s continued blessing in their lives.

7. We the delegates of the 58th Convention of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches thank the three churches of the Hillsboro area—Hillsboro, Parkview, and Ebenfeld Church, and Tabor College—who have ably and graciously hosted the delegates and guests to the convention.

We thank the presenters of messages, Herb Brandt, Lynn Jost, Edmund Janzen, Gerry Ediger, Ray Brystrom and those who served in area M.B. churches on Sunday morning, for the challenges they have given us to be submissive, to be citizens of the Kingdom, to be united in our common work, and to be courageous in the task. We commit ourselves to these challenges in our Christian walk and ministry in the coming triennium.

M/s/c to receive the report with suggestions by delegates regarding recognitions of fraternal guests and speakers to be noted.

1993 (128-29)

1. We wish to thank the Mennonite Brethren Church of Manitoba and its Moderator Jascha Boge for being our gracious hosts. Further, we express our appreciation to Harry Olfert and the various commissions of the local Conference Steering committee for their excellent work in making our convention function so very well. We commend them for their hard work, their unceasing care for all of our needs, and their warm spirit of hospitality. To Pastor Ernest Baumgartner (and staff) of the Immanuel Pentecostal Church, we say a special word of thanks for the use of their marvelous facilities.

2. During the past triennium our General Conference has benefited from the significant ministry of a goodly number of our leaders; among them are the outgoing members of our Conference Boards, to whom we express appreciation for their faithful service. Also, we express gratitude to Larry Martens and John E. Toews for their contribution in Seminary leadership, to Victor Adrian for Missions and Services program directions, and to J.B. Toews for authoring an historical analysis of the faith-life of the Mennonite Brethren from 1860 to 1990.

3. We express our love and care to Mrs. Hilda Wiens of Regina, Saskatchewan as she adjusts to the untimely loss of her husband, Ted, who had been nominated as a member of the Seminary Board.

4. We request those international leaders/moderators present at this convention to convey our sincere Christian greetings to their respective
national conferences, assuring them that they, indeed, are a part of our world family.

5. We express our gratefulness to those who arranged and implemented the worship services that have moved us deeply. For those who carefully planned our worship experiences, for those who so capably and sensitively led us in music and scripture, and for those who ministered the Word—we are indeed thankful.

6. We encourage our delegates and guests to return to their home congregations committed to keeping a strong flame burning. We encourage local leaders to keep congregations aware of our Vision Statement, as summarized in the brochure included in the conference packet.

7. With respect to Women in Leadership, we reaffirm our vital interest, concern and support of women in ministry and leadership. We recognize our diversity in views, all generally based on our various interpretations of Scripture, and we affirm the continued and appreciated ministry of women in our congregations and conferences.

1995 (88-89)

1. We wish to thank our hosts, MB Biblical Seminary, Fresno Pacific College, and the Fresno area churches, for the efficient manner in which they have arranged for this convention. We are grateful for the work of the Steering Committee as well as the work of those who provided for child care and the activities program for children and youth.

2. We join with the Seminary in celebrating forty years of God’s faithfulness in preparing men and women for ministry. We are grateful to God and to Elmer Martens, John E. Toews, Howard Loewen, and Hans Kasdorf for their many faithful years of seminary administration and teaching. We wish them well in their new assignments.

3. We are thankful to God and deeply appreciative of the many years of General Conference leadership by Edmund Janzen, Harry Heidebrecht, and John E. Toews. They have served faithfully and well in the General Conference for a combined total of over fifty years.

4. We thank all those who led us in worship and the five speakers who so ably led us through the theme, “A Firm Foundation for a Changing Future” (1 Cor. 3:11). We encourage our delegates and guests to return to their home congregations fully committed to our unique and universal Lord and to the task of sharing his unchanging love in a changing world.

5. We affirm the increasing interest in global outlook and have appreciated the presence of international guests with us. We encourage the Executive Council to continue this focus in future conventions.
6. We wish to recognize the strength and commitment both of
experienced and emerging leaders of the Mennonite Brethren Churches. We
encourage both younger and older leaders to value each other’s strengths,
counsel with one another regarding the future of the denomination, and
continue to build only on the foundation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

M/s/c

1997 (64-65)

1. We thank the Mennonite Brethren Churches
of Ontario for being our hosts. We thank especially the Waterloo, Glencairn
and Kitchener MB Churches, Peter Durksen and the organizational committees
for their excellent work in making our convention function well. They have
worked hard and they have shown us hospitality. Thank you to Waterloo MB
Church for the use of their facilities.

2. We thank our Conference Executive, Ed Boschman, Larry
Martens, and Valerie Rempel and Executive Secretary, Marvin Hein, for their
leadership during our convention.

3. We are thankful for those international leaders and moderators
present at this convention and request that they convey our sincere Christian
greetings to their respective national conferences.

4. We thank Ramsay Unruh and the worship
team for the powerful way in which they have led us in worship during the
convention.

5. We thank those who ministered the Word to
us during the convention on the theme “Straight Paths for a Twisting World.”
Their efforts have led us toward renewal by identifying the boulders hindering
our way and calling us to repentance and a passionate love for God and for all
our neighbors.

6. We encourage our delegates and guests to
return to their home congregations committed to pray for our conference
leaders and for the new Task Force on restructuring; and committed to
encourage participation from our local churches as input is sought by the Task
Force.

7. We thank our Conference Boards for their
inspiring and informative presentations at the convention, and for their
willingness to serve in their vital roles as we fulfill the Great Commission
together:

- the Seminary board for their continued commitment to produce
  passionate leaders who are biblically and theologically trained.
- the Board of Faith and Life for their diligence in giving spiritual
  leadership and direction to confessional issues.
- the Board of Resource Ministries for producing top quality materials in a variety of areas for use within our conference.
- the Board of Missions/Services for inspiring our participation as partners in global missions.
- the Board of Trustees for wisely and effectively managing the financial matters of the conference.

8. We affirm the growing significance of the International Committee of Mennonite Brethren. We give thanks for the strong spirit of cooperation present during this convention.

9. We pray that in the truest sense of peacemaking, Waterloo ’97 be known as the place where the forces of change and the forces of continuity, unlike Napoleon and Wellington, left arm in arm committed to building a new and unifying vision.

M/s/c

M/s/c to include the names of the speakers, Elmer Martens and Ed Boschman, in the resolution.

1999 (75-76)

1. We thank the First Mennonite Brethren Church of Wichita for hosting the convention and their gracious hospitality. Specifically we thank the local committee led by Ernie Friesen, the individuals who helped with the numerous tasks. The kitchen staff not only served delicious meals and snacks but also did so with smiles and efficiency.

2. We thank the Executive, including Ed Boschman, Herb Kopp, Valerie Rempel, and Marvin Hein for the tireless and committed leadership during the past several years and during this convention. They led a convention which faced some difficult questions, but they allowed delegates to speak freely and showed an openness to the Spirit’s guidance.

3. We thank those who ministered the word to us during the convention, particularly Ed Boschman and Brian Stiller, as well as those who led in worship and in prayer.

4. We thank Lorlie Barkman for the beautiful symbol which he created to highlight the theme of this Conference: “A Distinct Presence: The Aroma of Christ.”

5. We thank the many international guests who participated in the sessions with us and request them to bring warm Christian greeting back to their home congregations and conferences.

6. We thank the various Boards and staff for their inspiring and informative reports about the work that is being carried on in North America and beyond.
-the Board of Faith and Life for the beautiful words of our new Confession of Faith and for engaging us in the process of revisions so that we all feel that we have contributed and can take ownership of this instrument of confession and witness.
-the Board of Resource Ministries for continuing to call our gifted writers and for providing “resources like no other” to individuals and churches of our constituency.
-to our Board of Trustees for their faithful stewardship of our financial and material resources and for their careful guidance during the process of transition to help us avoid the many pitfalls which might otherwise have overcome us.
-Mennonite Brethren Missions Services International for the faithful witness they have carried out on our behalf for over a century in various countries around the world and for new partnerships which they are establishing with brothers and sisters around the world. We also thank Elizabeth Thiessen for 41 years of faithful service in Columbia.
-the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary for the sensitivity to new realities in our conference and for exploring and implementing new means of delivering theological and practical training to leaders in our conference.
-to the Historical Commission for new and creative efforts to preserve and tell the story particularly through publications such as the new “Profiles” series and the “Perspectives on Mennonite Life and Thought.”

7. We encourage the delegates to return with renewed vision and commitment to their home congregations, and to report and encourage other members to support the many worthwhile ministries of our denomination.

8. We express our gratitude to God for his faithful guidance of our General Conference during the past century and pray for renewal and faithfulness as we begin to develop new forms for carrying out the ministries he has entrusted to us.

M/s/c
`IV. Study Conference Papers, 1956-2003

1. List of Study Conferences and Symposia

A. Board of Reference and Counsel / Faith and Life

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<td>viii. Church, the Word, and the World</td>
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<td>ix. Hermeneutics</td>
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<td>xi. Mennonite Brethren Church Membership Profile</td>
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xiii. Peace and Church Membership  
    Calgary  
    April 27-29, 1988

xiv. The Nature and Ministry  
    of the Church  
    Normal, Ill.  
    August 2-4, 1989

xv. Church Growth Consultation  
    Richmond, BC  
    April 2-4, 1991

    Agreeing Together  
    Denver, CO  
    April 1-4, 1992

xvii. Ordaining, Using and Misusing  
    Authority in the Church  
    Denver  
    April 7-9, 1994

xviii. Spiritual Warfare  
    Calgary  
    October 25-27, 2001

B. Missions and Services

i. World Mennonite Brethren  
    Mission Consultation  
    Curitiba, Brazil  
    February 17-21, 1988

C. Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, Fresno

i. Symposium on Mennonite  
    Brethren History  
    Fresno  
    May 1-3, 1975

ii. P. M. Friesen Symposium  
    Fresno  
    May 4-6, 1978

iii. Symposium on Faith  
    and Ethnicity  
    Fresno  
    November 19-21, 1987

iv. North American Mennonite Brethren  
    at Mid-Century (1940-1960)  
    Fresno  
    February 4-6, 1993

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D. United States Conference: Board of Reference and Counsel

i. Authority and Interpretation of Scripture and Creation and the Scriptures
   Hillsboro November 22-24, 1966

ii. Exploratory Peace Study
    Hillsboro March 19-20, 1980

E. Canadian Conference: Committee of Reference and Counsel

i. Faith and Ethics Winnipeg February 15-16, 1967

ii. Christology: Doctrinal Faithfulness in an Age of Theological Accommodation
    Camp Arnes, Manitoba February 2-3, 1991

iii. Rite and Pilgrimage: A Study Conference on Baptism and Church Membership
     Winnipeg May 22-24, 2003

F. Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, Winnipeg

i. Influences Upon Mennonite Brethren Theology Winnipeg November 21-22, 1980

ii. Inter-Mennonite Relations: MBs and GCs in Canada Winnipeg November 4-5, 1983

iii. Dynamics of Faith and Culture in Mennonite Brethren Winnipeg November 14-15, 1986
2. Papers Presented

A. Board of Reference and Counsel, Board of Faith and Life

i. Introductory Study Conference: Doctrinal Issues
   Winnipeg, Manitoba
   December 12-15, 1956

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<tr>
<td>The Scriptural Concept of the Church and its Implications for the</td>
<td>Jacob H. Quiring</td>
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<td>Organizational and Structural Functions for the Mennonite Brethren</td>
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<td>The Gifts of the Holy Spirit To The Believers</td>
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<td>Benjamin B. Janz</td>
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<td>Baptism of the Holy Spirit and The Spirit-Filled Life</td>
<td>George W. Peters</td>
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<td>Note: Above paper not listed in Christian Leader report</td>
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<td>The Scriptural Concept of the Church Report No. 1—Findings Committee</td>
<td>Waldo Hiebert, B.J. Braun, and John H. Epp</td>
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## ii. Doctrinal Issues

Denver, Colorado,  
July 12-16, 1958

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<td>D. Edmond Hiebert</td>
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<td>The Biblical Teaching on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage</td>
<td>John B. Toews</td>
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<td>The Biblical Concept of the Nature of the Church</td>
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<td>The Scriptural Teaching on Organization and Government of the Local Church</td>
<td>B. J. Braun</td>
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<td>The Scriptural Pattern of the Diaconate</td>
<td>Reuben M. Baerg</td>
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<td>Our General Concept of Biblical Eschatology</td>
<td>Gerhard D. Huebert</td>
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iii. General Study Conference
Herbert, Saskatchewan
July 10-13, 1959

Christian Ideals in Marriage and Sex
Waldo D. Hiebert

A Biblical Study on the Subject of Feet-Washing
Clarence Hiebert

The Biblical Teaching on Man
David B. Wiens

Church and State in the New Testament
Frank C. Peters

The Christian and Race Relations
Wesley Priebe

The Inspiration of the Scriptures
Arthur G. Willems

Christian Social Ethics from the Biblical Standpoint
A.E. Janzen

A Model Constitution for an M.B. Church
B.J. Braun
iv. Issues Concerning Church and Home
Reedley, California
November 23-24, 1967

Consensus and Change in our
Brotherhood
Frank C. Peters

The Church, Its Regulations,
and the Individual Member
Marvin Hein

Dealing Redemptively with the
Divorced and Remarried
Jacob Quiring

Christian Responsibility in
Relation to Planned Parenthood
Abe B. Voth, M.D.
v. Conference on Evangelism and Discipleship

Winnipeg, Manitoba
May 7-9, 1968

Principles of Discipleship for Mennonite Brethren Churches (plus published version)
Arno Wiebe

Doctrinal Priorities for Evangelism
Reuben M. Baerg

Functional Fellowship for Evangelism
Orlando Wiebe

Remarriage of Divorced in Light of Scripture (plus published version)
George W. Peters

The Christian and Labor Unions (plus published version)
John H. Redekop

Strategy of Outreach (Questionnaires & Report of the Findings Committee Included)
Jacob J. Toews
vi. The Ministry, Men and Media
   Buhler, Kansas
   March 5-6, 1970

The Commissioning of Servants in the Church (plus published version)

Orlando H. Wiebe

Questionnaire on Ordination

Recruitment of Servants in the Church (plus published version)

Waldo Hiebert

Summary of Findings of Recruitment of Servants in the Church

The Place of Preaching in the Contemporary Church (plus published version)

John Regehr

Questionnaire for "The Place of Preaching in the Contemporary Church"

The Ghetto, The Launch Pad, The Desert (plus published version)

Rudy Wiebe

Questionnaire for "The Ghetto, The Launch Pad, The Desert"

"Statements" of the four basic Study Papers

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An Approach to the Current Charismatic Movement
(plus published version) — David Ewert

A Christian Perspective on Abortion (plus published version) — Vern Ratzlaff

The Whole Gospel to the Whole Man — Victor Adrian

Church Membership: Its Essence and Necessity — Marvin Hein

Two Responses to Paper "An Approach to the Current Charismatic Movement"

Comments and Reactions to the Paper "A Christian Perspective on Abortion" — Walter Regehr

Response to "The Whole Gospel to the Whole Man" — Henry H. Voth

"Church Membership: It's Essence and Necessity" (Monday evening discussion)
viii. Church, the Word, and the World
Clearbrook, British Columbia
May 10-11, 1974

The Place of Feeling in Christian Experience  Waldo Hiebert

The Use of the Old Testament in the Church  Elmer Martens

The Christian and his Material Possessions  Leonard B. Siemens

The Church and the Urban Frontier  Edmund Janzen
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<td>Interpreting Old Testament Prophecy</td>
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<td>What are the Gospels?</td>
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<td>Elmer A. Martens</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Pauline View of Women</td>
<td>Howard Loewen</td>
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**x. Eschatology Conference**  
Fresno, California  
January 25-27, 1978

The Last Days  
David Ewert

The Tribulation of the Church  
John E. Toews

The Place of Israel  
Victor Adrian

Millennialism and the Mennonite Brethren Church  
Abe Dueck

The People of God in the Light of the Parousia  
John A. Toews

Concluding Statements
Overview of the Study

Church Membership Survey Findings

Mennonite Brethren and North American Society

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<td>Isaac Block</td>
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Conclusions and Implications

Note: The above papers were published in *Direction* 14, 2 (Fall, 1985). Additional materials related to the study are at the Center for MB Studies in Fresno and the Centre for MB Studies in Winnipeg.
xii. Mennonite Brethren Church as a Covenant Community
Fresno, California
October 15-17, 1986

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<td>A Converted and Baptized People</td>
<td>Raymond O. Bystrom</td>
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<td>Response to: A Converted and Baptized People</td>
<td>Ed Boschman</td>
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<td>The Mennonite Brethren as a Confessing Church</td>
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<td>Response to: The Mennonite Brethren Church: A Covenanting Community</td>
<td>Katie Funk Wiebe</td>
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<td>Response to: The Brethren Church: A Covenanting People</td>
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<td>Gerry Ediger</td>
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<td>Response to: The Leading Ministry in a Covenant Brotherhood Community</td>
<td>Vern Heidebrecht</td>
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<td>Response to: The Leading Ministry in a Covenant Brotherhood Community</td>
<td>Abram G. Konrad</td>
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<td>A Serving People</td>
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<td>Response to: A Serving People</td>
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Response to: A Caring People
Frances F. Hiebert
Findings Reports
xiii. Peace and Church Membership
   Calgary, Alberta
   April 27-29, 1988

Biblical and Theological Perspectives on Peace  Abe Dueck
Church Membership Issues  Marvin Hein
Peacemaking and the Church  Larry Martens
Findings Committee Report
The Lord’s Supper and the Church  
Erwin Penner

The Nature of the Church  
John E. Toews

The Ministry of Women:  
Timothy Gedert
A Proposal for MBs

Women’s Role in Ministry in the Church  
Ed Boschman

Findings Committee Report  
Harry Heidebrecht, Gerry Ediger
xv. Church Growth Consultation
Richmond, British Columbia
April 2-4, 1991

Sponsored by Board of Faith and Life, the Center for Training in Mission/Evangelism, Mennonite Brethren Missions and Services, and the US and Canadian Boards of Evangelism

Planting Churches in North America Today       Paul Hiebert
Response                                      Jim Holm
Response                                      James N. Pankratz

Biblical Perspectives of Church which          Herb Kopp
Mennonite Brethren Should Embrace
Response                                      Chuck Buller
Response                                      Vern Heidebrecht

Church Growth: Leadership Theology             James Nikkel
and M. B. Theology
Response                                      Isaac Block
Response                                      John E. Toews

The Church Growth Theory and Mennonite         John B. Toews
Brethren Polity
Response                                      Marvin Hein
Response                                      Herb Neufeld

Diverse Models/Strategies of Church Planting/  Henry Schmidt
Growth Among Mennonite Brethren
Response                                      Juan Martinez
Response

Dale Warkentin

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<tr>
<td>The Nature of the Church—Implications for Mennonite Brethren Congregations in the 90s</td>
<td>Edmund Janzen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Note: The above paper was withdrawn and not presented (MB Herald, May 1, 1992, p. 15)</td>
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<td>Reclaiming the Solitary Christian</td>
<td>Ron Toews</td>
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<td>The Lord’s Supper</td>
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xvii. Ordaining, Using and Misusing Authority in the Church
Denver, CO
April 7-9, 1994

Ordination: A Discussion Primer Tim Geddert

Note: The above was the only formal paper. Other materials available.
xviii. Spiritual Warfare
Dalhousie Community Church
Calgary, Alberta
October 25-27, 2001

The Third Wave Worldview: Biblical or Pagan? Pierre Gilbert
Equipping Principles: for Spiritual Warfare Randy Friesen
Mission and Power Encounter Nzash Lumeya
Spiritual Warfare from the Perspective of Mental health John Toews M.D.
B. Mennonite Brethren Missions and Services

i. World Mennonite Brethren Mission Consultation
Curitiba, Brazil
February 17-21, 1988

Some Strategy Issues in Mennonite Brethren Mission
Victor Adrian

Response to V. Adrian's Paper, "Some Strategy..."
Erwin H. Rempel

World Trends and Their Implications for Mennonite Brethren Missions
Paul G. Hiebert

Response to Paul Hiebert's . . . .
Marlin E. Miller

Mission Future: Issues We Face
Hans Kasdorf

Comments on Hans Kasdorf's Paper: Mission Future....
Melvin J. Loewen

Strategies For Cross-Cultural Mission: Past/Present and Future
Jacob A. Loewen

Response to Jacob Loewen's "Three Models/Strategies for Cross-cultural Mission"
Peter M. Hamm

Effective Church Growth Strategies
Takoa Nakamura

Effective Church Growth Strategies: The Case of Zaire
Shindany A. Fumu

The Role of Baptism and Church Membership in the M.B.
Dietrich Reimer
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<td>Churches Around the World</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Role of Baptism and Church Membership in the M.B. Churches Around the World</strong></td>
<td>Kilabi Bululu</td>
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<td><strong>What Can We Learn From Other Mission Strategies</strong></td>
<td>Peter M. Hamm</td>
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<td><strong>Mennonite Brethren Distinctives</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Being Peacemakers in the World of Unrest</strong></td>
<td>Henry J. Schmidt</td>
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<td><strong>Being Peacemakers in the World of Unrest</strong></td>
<td>Kusangila Kitondo</td>
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<td><strong>A Prioridade Da Evangelizacao Na Missao Da Igreja</strong></td>
<td>Albert Enns</td>
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<td><strong>Evagenismo Como Missao Prioritaria Da Igreja</strong></td>
<td>Alvo Waldow</td>
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<td><strong>Principles of Internation-alization in the Mennonite Brethren Mission</strong></td>
<td>Nzash Lumeya</td>
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<td><strong>Principles of Internation-alization in the Mennonite Brethren Mission</strong></td>
<td>Harold Enns</td>
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<td><strong>When Did You Leave Your Wife?</strong></td>
<td>Ted W. Engstrom and E. R. Dayton</td>
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C. Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies: Fresno

i. Symposium on Mennonite Brethren History
   Fresno, California, May 1-3, 1975

   - Mennonite Brethren Identity in the Context of Changing Theological Influences
     John B. Toews

   - Keeping Body and Soul Together in Church History
     Frank H. Epp

   - 1525 Revisited? A Comparison of Anabaptist and Mennonite Brethren Origins
     Cornelius J. Dyck

   - The Development of Mennonite Brethren Churches in North America: Some Reflections, Interpretations and Viewpoints
     Clarence Hiebert

   - The Russian Origins of the Mennonite Brethren: Some Observations
     John B. Toews (Calgary)

   - Incarnation and Ideal: The Story of a Truth Becoming Heresy
     Delbert Wiens

   - A Vision for the Role of Mennonite Brethren Education Institutions in Mennonite Brethren Identity Formation
     John E. Toews

   - Outline for Projected Mennonite Brethren History Course
     Henry Krahn, Abe Dueck

   - Past, Present and Future
     Herbert Giesbrecht

   Address by John A. Toews
ii.  P. M. Friesen Symposium
Fresno, California
May 4-6, 1978

Brotherhood and Family; Implications of Kinship in Mennonite Brethren History

The Significance of P.M. Friesen's History for Mennonite Brethren Self-Understanding

The Russian Mennonite Intellect of the Nineteenth Century

The German-Russian Tensions Among the Mennonites in Russia (1789 - 1917)

The Historiography of the Birth of the Mennonite Brethren Church: An Introduction

P.M. Friesen: The Historian

Voices from the Past: The Polyphonic History of P.M. Friesen

Johann Claassen: Trailblazer for the Brethren
iii. Symposium on Faith and Ethnicity
Fresno, California
November 19-21 1987

Ethnicity and the Mennonite Brethren
John H. Redekop

Mennonite Brethren in Three Countries: Comparative Profiles of an Ethno-Religious Tradition
Robert Enns and Al Dueck

Social Science Theory and A People Apart: Some Considerations
Miriam E. Warner

Ethnicity and Faith: Some Old Testament Perspectives
Elmer A. Martens

Assimilation in Israel: Reflections on the Actual and the Ideal
Allen R. Guenther

Doing Mission with a Universal Gospel and Cultural Diversity
Francis F. Hiebert

Ethnicity and Evangelism in the Mennonite Brethren Church
Paul G. Hiebert

A Symposium on Faith and Ethnicity Among the Mennonite Brethren: Summary and Findings Statement
Findings Committee
Fresno, California
February 4-6, 1993

North American Mennonite Brethren and Issues
of War, Peace and Nonresistance, 1940-1960
Abe Dueck

Decades of Transition: North American Mennonite
Brethren in Politics, 1940-1960.
John H. Redekop

Autobiography
Waldo Hiebert

Autobiography
John B. Toews

Reminiscences and Reflections, 1940-1960
David Ewert

Ecclesiological Developments
Kyle, Richard

Economic Transformation of Canadian
Mennonite Brethren
Ted Regehr

Economic Developments in the United States
Calvin Redekop

“She Hath Done What She Could:” The Development
of the Women Missionary Services in the
Mennonite Brethren Churches of the United States
Valerie Rempel

Canadian Mennonite Women’s Societies from 1940 to 1960: More than meets the Eye
Gloria Neufeld Redekop

Canadian Mennonite Brethren and
Language Transition, 1940-1960
Gerry Ediger

Making a Home in the City: Mennonite Brethren
Urbanization in California, 1895-1960
Kevin Enns-Rempel

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## D. United States Conference: Board of Reference and Counsel

### i. Hillsboro, Kansas,
November 22-24, 1966

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<td>Nature of Biblical Authority</td>
<td>John C. Wenger</td>
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<td>Grammatical Interpretation</td>
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<td>Perspectives for an Interpretation of the Creation Account of Genesis</td>
<td>David Ewert</td>
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<td>The Problem of Chronology in the Genesis Account of Creation</td>
<td>David Ewert</td>
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<td>The Biblical Record of the Creation of the Cosmos</td>
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<td>The Biblical Record of the Creation of Man</td>
<td>David Ewert</td>
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<td>Creation in the Old Testament in General</td>
<td>David Ewert</td>
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ii. Exploratory Peace Study
Hillsboro, Kansas
March 19-20, 1980

Peace and Nonresistance: A Bible Study
Edmund Janzen

A Theology of War in the Old Testament?
A Reappraisal of Mennonite Thinking
and a Study of Deuteronomistic Theology Regarding War
Marlin E. Thomas

Selected Documents Regarding Peace, Love, Nonresistance,
Peace-making and Reconciliation Emphasized by
Mennonite Brethren Historically
Clarence Hiebert

Report on Trip to Washington D.C.,
Feb. 7-9, 1980
Henry H. Dick

Implementing a Congregational Dialogue
on the Draft and National Service
Mike Klassen

The Mennonite Brethren and War Service
B. J. Braun

The Non-cooperation Position
Mervin Dick
E. Canadian Conference: Committee of Reference and Counsel and Mennonite Brethren Bible College

i. Faith and Life Ethics Conference: Ministers and Deacons
   Winnipeg, Manitoba
   February 15-16, 1967

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<td>Marriage of Believers with Non-Believers</td>
<td>David B. Wiens</td>
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<td>Victor Adrian</td>
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<td>An Approach to Problems of Christian Ethics</td>
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ii. The Blessed Hope: Second Faith and Life Conference
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
July 6-7, 1970

The Blessed Hope and the Christian Witness  Wally Unger
The Blessed Hope and Christian Stewardship  David B. Wiens
The Blessed Hope and Christian Ethics  Vern Ratzlaff
The Blessed Hope and Social Action  Harold Jantz
The Blessed Hope and the Eternal Kingdom  John Regehr
iii. Christology
Camp Arnes, Manitoba
February 2-3, 1991

Identifying the Problems: John Redekop
Symposium on Christology

Toward an Outline of Pluralism and the John E. Toews
Exclusivity of Christ: A Biblical Perspective

Pluralism and the Exclusivity of Christ: Ian Rennie
A Canadian Historical Anabaptist Perspective

Can there be Unity in the Spirit without Kenneth Davis
Doctrinal Unity about Christ?

No Other Name: A Biblical View of James Pankratz
Atonement within Non-Christian Faiths

Anabaptist/Evangelical Cooperation and Wally Unger
Unity: How Much?
### iv. Rite and Pilgrimage: A Study Conference on Baptism and Church Membership

Winnipeg, Manitoba  
May 22-24, 2003

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<td>MB Theology of Baptism</td>
<td>Lynn Jost</td>
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<td>Critique of “MB Theology of Baptism”</td>
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<td>Bruce L. Guenther</td>
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### F. Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies: Winnipeg

#### i. Symposium: Influences Upon Mennonite Brethren Theology

Winnipeg, Manitoba  
November 21-22, 1980

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<tr>
<td>The Free Church Concept and its Implications for Mennonite Brethren Theology</td>
<td>Henry Krahn</td>
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<td>The Free Church Concept and its Implications for M.B. Theology -revised for Direction</td>
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<td>John B. Toews</td>
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<td>Response to J.B. Toews</td>
<td>Harry Loewen</td>
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<td>The Interaction of Economics and Religion the Case of the Mennonite Brethren in Canada (revised)</td>
<td>John H. Redekop</td>
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<td>The Interaction of Economics and Religion: the Case of the Mennonite Brethren in Canada (published version)</td>
<td>John H. Redekop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Church &amp; State: Developments among Mennonite Brethren in Canada since World War II</td>
<td>Abe J. Dueck</td>
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<tr>
<td>Response to Abe Dueck, &quot;Church &amp; State: Developments among Mennonite Brethren since World War II</td>
<td>Victor Doerksen</td>
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Seeking a Faith to Live By: Herb Giesbrecht
Modifying Influences Upon the Faith Confessed by Mennonite Brethren

The State of Mennonite Brethren Ken Reddig
Historical Research
### ii. Symposium: Inter-Mennonite Relations: MBs and GCs in Canada

**Winnipeg, Manitoba**  
**November 4 - 5, 1983**

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<td>Mennonite Brethren &amp; General Conference Relations in Pre-WW1 Russia. Setting the Stage for Canada</td>
<td>John B. Toews</td>
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<td>Congregational Relations of MBs and GCs In Canada</td>
<td>Gerhard Lohrenz</td>
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<td>Singing the New Song Together: MB-GC Relations in Music</td>
<td>Peter Letkemann</td>
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<td>The Mennonite Writer as Witness and Critic</td>
<td>Harry Loewen</td>
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<td>Mennonite Brethren &amp; General Conference Theology - A Common Center, A Single Foundation</td>
<td>Walter Unger</td>
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<td>Mennonite Brotherhood: &quot;Quo Vadis&quot;?</td>
<td>George Epp</td>
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<td>Exploring an Uneasy Relationship: A Meetinghouse Article</td>
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November 14-15, 1986

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