Interim Council
Mennonite Church Canada
Mennonite Church British Columbia
Mennonite Church Alberta
Mennonite Church Saskatchewan
Mennonite Church Manitoba
Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

The Proposal: An Introduction

Keith Regehr, Transition Coordinator
January 27, 2017

The proposal you see here provides some initial detail about vision and structure for MC Canada. This proposal flows from the approval of the Future Directions Task Force Report and Addendum by the delegate assembly in July 2016 in Saskatoon.

This proposal was developed in conversation with the Executive Staff Group, which is made up of the executive staff leaders of MC Canada and the Area Churches. It was reviewed and approved for circulation by the Interim Council (which is made up of the Moderator and Vice Moderator of MC Canada and the Moderators of the five Area Churches).

An early draft received comment by the Governance Working Group, the Finance Working Group, and the Listening/Reference Group. The final version was also reviewed by the Governance Working Group and the Listening/Reference Group. Due to extremely tight time frames the second review had only limited impact on the draft you see, but the comments have been collected for use as the proposal is further developed and refined. The final draft has also been reviewed by the General Board and the Boards of the five Area Churches. The comments from those groups are also being collected for subsequent refinement.

The next step is to bring the Proposal to the five Area Church annual meetings/gatherings in the next few months. Area Church delegates will be asked for their input on the proposal. At each of these gatherings there will be opportunity for both verbal and written feedback to the Transition Team. This feedback will be used to refine what has already been done and to feed into further work in preparation for the final proposal to the Special Delegate Assembly in Winnipeg, October 13 to 15, 2017 (further details pending).

We also welcome your feedback now by sending an email to contact@futuredirectionsmc.ca, or through comments at the Future Directions website (http://futuredirectionsmc.ca/contact/) or Facebook group. (https://www.facebook.com/groups/538779826316469/).

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A Proposal for Revitalizing Mennonite Church Canada: A Working Document Executive Summary

January 26, 2017
Approved By Interim Council

The Vision

Vision: Healing and Hope:

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

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

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

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

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

Change Overview

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

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

Covenant

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

Membership and Governance Structure

Membership in the larger bodies

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

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

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

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

National Shared Priorities

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

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

Financial Sharing Principles

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

Strengthening of Regional Churches

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

Budget

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

Outline of the By-Law

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

Key Leadership Groups

Interim Council

Responsible for overall leadership of the transition process

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

Executive Staff Group

Primary working group for the transition process

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

A Proposal for Revitalizing MC Canada: A Working Document

January 11, 2017
Approved by Interim Council and Area Church Boards for circulation, review, and comment.

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Introduction

History

- 2011 – 2012 – a series of MC Canada/Area Church leader consultations on challenges facing the church in changing times;
- November 2012 – Mandate for Future Directions Task Force approved;
- February 2013 – Task Force begins its work;
- October 2013 – First Interim Report released for consultation with congregations through Area Church Delegate Assemblies across Canada;
- July 2014 – "Reimagining how we think about Church" consultation with delegates at MC Canada Assembly 2014;
- November 2014 – "God, Mission and a People" interim report tested with staff and boards of area and national levels of MC Canada;
- February – April 2015 – refined "God, Mission and a People" report tested with congregations at Area Church delegate assemblies across Canada;
- December 2015 – Completion of the final report "What is God Calling Us to in the 21st Century";
- February – April 2016 – Final Report tested with congregations at Area Church delegate assemblies across Canada;
- May 2016 – Preparation of a brief Addendum to the Final Report;
- July 2016 – FDTF Final Report and Addendum approved at MC Canada Assembly 2016.

In July 2016 in Saskatoon the Delegate Assembly of Mennonite Church Canada approved the Final Report and Addendum of the Future Directions Task Force.

The basic structure for Mennonite Church Canada that was approved included several principles:

- The purpose of the restructuring process will enable us to serve and worship God together more faithfully and effectively;
- The congregation as the primary place of worship and mission;
- The Regional Churches as a place of support to congregations in their work of worship and mission;
- The Regional Church as a place for congregations be part of something larger than themselves;
- The National Church as a place for congregations and Regional Churches to be part of something larger than themselves;
- The National Church as a place of connection, communion across the country, identity, and working together to do things we cannot do alone;
- Mennonite World Conference as a place for us to be part of something larger than the National Church; and,
- All levels of the church are part of our identity as a particular expression of the body of Christ.

The addendum offered an additional 6 recommendations:

- That prior to implementation there be opportunity to vote on a more fully developed proposal no later than July 2018, with on-going consultation with congregations during the transition phase on development/refinement of major program directions.

- That the final proposal incorporate some form of Regional Church delegate involvement in the governance of national agenda and priorities.
- That the final proposal include a provision for national gatherings for study, fellowship, worship, and discernment.
- That a formal conversation be undertaken (e.g. via a working group, conference, or other means) to review our future vision and strategy for international relationships and witness, addressing the above and related questions, to be completed by December 2017.
- That the final proposal include concrete provisions that recognize and respond to the vulnerability of the smaller Regional Churches.
- That a formal conversation be undertaken (e.g. via a working group, conference, or other means) to build on the Report and engage congregations to: (a) dream about how to live out the gospel of Christ locally, across Canada and abroad; (b) think creatively on how congregations can resource our common life together in being the church; and, in the short term, (c) work together and generously support our mutual ministry and transition from where we are to where God invites us to be.

What has happened since:

- Development of a work plan, of which the key elements are:
    - Develop and implement transition communication plan;
    - Develop and implement working groups reference groups;
        - Working groups do generative work on various aspects of the new structure;
        - Reference groups respond to ideas developed by ESG and Interim Council;
    - Develop draft covenant;
    - Develop principles for financial sharing;
    - Development of initial proposal for feedback by Area Church Delegate Assemblies;
    - Refining Proposal;
    - Results of Working Group activities to be circulated for feedback from congregations and Area Churches;
    - Preparation of final proposal
    - Presentation of final proposal to Special Delegate Assembly in October 2017.
- Familiarization of Transition Coordinator through meetings with Interim Council, Area Church leaders, and participation in the cross-Canada tour of workshops led by the Emerging Voices Initiative;
- Working group Terms of Reference completed;
- Working Group membership completed;
- Initial models for finance across the entire denomination developed;
- Initial models for governance of the entire denomination developed;
- Drafting a new covenant governing the relationships among the Regional Churches comprising a new MC Canada.;
- Preparation of this proposal.

The Proposal

BACKGROUND

This document is an initial draft of portions of the proposal ultimately to be presented for consideration at a Special Delegate Assembly (tentatively, October 2017). There will be more detail in the final proposal as the working groups finalize their tasks.

The Regional Church Delegate Assemblies are invited to engage with this proposal and to provide feedback to the Interim Council. The Interim Council will take this feedback, the work done by the Working Groups, and other input to finalize the proposal for presentation to the Special Delegate Assembly.

CHANGE OVERVIEW

What changes?

THE CULTURE	THE BASIC STRUCTURE	PROGRAMME AND OTHER ITEMS FOR REVIEW
• Reorientation to the local congregation • Refocus around the mission of God • Shift in resources and programme from National Church to the Regional Churches • Focus on the Regional Churches to support the congregation in its work • The National Church as the speaker for the whole at the direction of the Regional Churches • The National Church as the holder of identity as defined by the collective of Regional Churches and congregations • Program tied more closely to congregational energy and discernment	• The National Church governed directly by the Regional Churches through a Board made up of 5 Regional Church Moderators, 4 Officers, and 2 Members at Large • Annual Meeting made up of Regional Church Boards and members appointed by Regional Churches • Regional Churches governed by congregations through delegates • National gatherings for connection, worship, study • Congregation of Ministerial Leaders to meet for connection and learning • All fundraising through the Regional Churches • Program allocated among Regional Churches and National Church	• Financial sharing • International witness • Domestic witness • Communication • Higher education/leadership formation • Camps • Congregational vitality • National identity • Governance • Covenant to carry relationships • By laws to reflect structure • programme and support service allocation • Congregation of Ministerial Leadership

What does this mean for the structures?

	Current Structure	Proposed Change	How is it Different	Implications
Congregations		Congregations are named as being at the centre of the mission and worship of the church.	While this statement does not mean the other levels of the church are less important, it does suggest that the congregation is where most people engage in the church, and that the key to strengthening the church is strengthening the congregation.	There needs to be a greater emphasis in the Regional Churches on support for congregational vitality, whether spiritual, outreach/missional, etc. Financial accommodation to strengthen the capacity of smaller Regional Churches to support to their congregations will be needed.
Regional Churches		Regional Churches are the key support to congregations as they seek to move to greater vitality.	The national entity plays a reduced role in direct connection to the congregations as the Regional Church role is strengthened. The national level provides system wide supports as discerned by the Regional Churches.	Congregations will give to the Regional Churches, and national funding will flow from them. A shift in financial resources from the national level to Regional Churches.
Covenant	Signed by MC Canada and 5 Area Churches	Signed by 5 Regional Churches	MC Canada is not a signatory to the covenant. MC Canada is created by the covenant signed by the Regional Churches	MC Canada has no existence apart from the agreement among the 5 Regional Churches and MC Canada's goals and work are the result of that agreement. The new structure strengthens lines of communication among the Regional Churches

	Current Structure	Proposed Change	How is it Different	Implications
Membership in MC Canada	Area Churches and Congregations are members of MC Canada	Regional Churches are members of new national entity	Congregations are members of their Regional Church only	Congregations speak into regional and shared national/international agenda through the Regional Church
MC Canada Board	The General Board is made up of the officers, the moderators or another designate of Area Churches, chair of Faith and Life, the chair and one other from each of the 3 Councils (Engagement, Formation, Witness), one member at Large. Officers and member at large are elected by delegate assembly,	The Joint Board is made up of the officers, Regional Church Moderators and 2 members at large.	In the existing structure, arguably only 5 General Board members are accountable to the Delegate Assembly; 6 have a programme responsibility that can complicate the approach to issues; and 5 have primary accountability to their Area Churches. In the new structure 6 board members are directly accountable to the Annual Meeting of MC Canada and 5 have primary accountability to their Regional Churches.	The primary result is that the Joint Board is less programme focused and more governance focused. In addition, with no programme related members it is more clearly accountable to the Annual Meeting through the elected members and more clearly accountable to Regional Church Boards and Delegate Assemblies through the Annual Meeting and through the moderators.
	MC Canada Board discerns national direction for approval through its Delegate Assembly. Regional Church Boards discern their direction for approval by their Delegate Assemblies.	National priorities are shaped by the discernment of the Regional Church Boards and Delegate Assemblies which are then clarified though the Joint Board and Annual Meeting of MC Canada with ongoing input by the Regional Church representatives present in the meetings.	The previous system created the potential of MC Canada moving in different directions than the Area Churches, and in fact set up possible conflict between the Area Churches and MC Canada. In the new system, the national priorities are named and developed by the Regional Churches working together.	The national voice becomes the voice of the regions rather than having a separate voice.

	Current Structure	Proposed Change	How is it Different	Implications
National gatherings for decision making	The members of MC Canada (both congregations and Area Churches) appointed delegates to the Delegate Assembly. The number of delegates permitted is proportional to the size of congregations and Area Churches. The maximum possible is around 500 congregational reps and 38 AC reps.	The Regional Churches send participants to the Annual Meeting. These participants include all their Board Members plus members at large. The number of members at large is set by a formula that with current numbers would be 56. An estimate of board members would be around 50 to 60 people	There are no congregational representatives at the national Annual Meeting. The gatherings are much smaller. All attendees at the Annual Meeting are representatives of their Regional Churches other than the officers and members at large elected to the board by the previous Annual Meeting.	Congregations have input through the Regional Churches, giving them increased voice. This presumes that congregation have input at Regional Church. The meetings are smaller. Voices speaking at the Annual Meeting are Regional Church voices discerning together for the whole.

NAMING

When organizations restructure, the use of new language plays an important role in helping distinguish the new structure and ways of being from the old.

To that end the following are two possible ways to shift the names.

Current Structure	**Alternative 1**	**Alternative 2**
General Board	Joint Board	National Governance Council
Delegate Assembly	Annual Meeting	National Delegate Assembly (Annual and Special)
Area Church	Regional Church	Regional Conference
MC Canada	National Church	National Denomination

MEMBERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Membership:

Currently the 5 Area Churches are members of MC Canada, and each of their constituent congregations are members of MC Canada as long as they remain members of the Area Church. This is subject to provision that has been made for some congregations to be members of their Area Church without becoming members of MC Canada.

In the proposed structure, the Regional Churches will be the only members of MC Canada. Congregations speak into issues at the national level through their participation in discernment in their Regional Churches. This structure is designed to meet the following goals:

- Regional Churches collectively establish the priorities of the national structure;
- A central purpose of the restructuring process is to strengthen congregational life. The new structure clarifies the roles of MC Canada and the Regional Churches in supporting congregational life;
- Because these priorities are established through the Regional Church board and delegate assembly structures, this ensures a strong voice for congregations in priority setting at the national level that is not limited by the ability or willingness of congregational representatives to attend MC Canada Assemblies.

Regional Churches will have representatives at the national level in three ways:

- Regional Churches will appoint representatives to the Joint Board of MC Canada;
- Regional Churches will appoint representatives to the Annual Meeting of MC Canada;
- The Executive Staff of the Regional Churches will meet regularly with the Executive Staff of MC Canada to ensure the good functioning of the system at the staff level.

Governance Structure

Annual Meeting

Annual Meeting Membership

All members of all Regional Church Boards will be members of the MC Canada Annual Meeting. All members of the MC Canada Board will be members of the Annual Meeting.

Each Regional Church will appoint five additional delegates plus one delegate per 1,000 individual members of its member congregations after rounding up to the next highest thousand. Based on current Regional Church membership numbers the additional delegates will be as follows, it must be noted that these numbers are estimates:

Regional Church	Current Members	Current # Delegates
MCBC	3377	5+4=9
MC M	8400	5+9=14
MC A	1100	5+2=7
MCEC	15000	5+15=20
M SK	2900	5+3=8
Totals	30777	25+33=58

Annual Meeting Competencies

In choosing delegates for the Annual Meeting, the Regional Churches will seek to choose members to ensure that the following competencies are represented:

- Theological: It is important that there be delegates able to think and speak theologically about the church;
- Programmatic: It is important to have delegates with the ability to speak to questions of programme, programme oversight and monitoring;
- System thinking: It is important that there be delegates able to think about the MC Canada system as a whole. It would be important that they be able to speak to the ways that the various parts interact with each other, and how changes in one area affect other areas. This is especially important in the context of the wide differences in membership and resources in the various Regional Churches;
- Mission and the 21st Century: The church in Canada is facing significant shifts in the culture, and in its location within that culture. It is important that there be delegates who can speak to those shifts and the ways that they both limit the church and create new opportunities;
- Diversity: The church is a tapestry of diversity. The church needs to be attentive to that diversity and have it represented within its governance structures. To that end the Regional Churches will make it a priority to represent that diversity within their leadership bodies and in the delegates they appoint.

Annual Meeting Functions and Powers

The Annual Meeting will have the usual powers of such gatherings—electing officers, approving budgets, appointing auditors, and many more, all of which will be set out in the by-laws. More importantly for the life of the church, the Annual Meeting, as a gathering of Regional Church representatives speaking on behalf of their congregational members, will be called on to:

- Discern together the national priorities regarding the ways that MC Canada participates with congregations and Regional Churches in God's work;
- Consider issues facing the church;
- Provide input and advice to the Board regarding needs and concerns experienced at the congregational level;
- Provide a forum for Congregations and Regional Churches to engage together on missional work at the national and global level;
- Enable MC Canada to provide resources that support congregational life.

Annual Meeting Process

The Annual Meeting is the primary governance structure of MC Canada. It delegates the board to act on its behalf in carrying out the mission of the church. The Board is accountable to the Annual Meeting.

Meetings

Other gatherings of the church such as study conferences, or meetings of the Congregation of Ministerial Leaders will be tied to the Annual Meeting. This is so that non-delegates attending those gatherings will have the opportunity to be present the Annual Meeting. Those who are not members of the Annual Meeting will have floor privileges in order to speak to issues under consideration, but will not have voting rights.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee will report to the Annual Meeting. It will be made up of one representative of each Regional Church and will prepare the list of candidates for the Officers and Members at Large for the Board for approval by the Annual Meeting.

Board

Board Membership

The moderators of all five Regional Churches will be members of the board. In addition, the MC Canada Annual Meeting will elect four officers (Moderator, Vice Moderator, Treasurer, and Secretary) and two Members at Large. A slate of candidates for these roles will be prepared by a Nominating Committee.

For officers, the by-laws will set length of terms, term limits, and will ensure that all changes do not happen in the same year.

In selecting candidates, for officers and members no more than two shall be from any one Regional Church.

Competencies required in the Joint Board

The focus of the board is on governance rather than day to day management of programme. Nevertheless, the competencies outlined here allow good supervision of the Executive Minister by ensuring that the Board has strong knowledge of the key areas of executive leadership.

- Legal: someone with a legal background will assist the board in ensuring compliance with the various constraints imposed by law;
- Accounting/Finance: Someone with this background will help the board in ensuring good financial management;
- HR: A board member with HR background will assist the board in assuring oversight of HR practices;
- Planning: Someone with a planning background will assist the board in oversight of the planning process;
- Leadership Management: a board member with expertise in these areas will assist the board in its oversight function with the Executive Minister;
- Ecclesiology/Mission and the 21st C: A person with background in these areas will assist the board in its obligations to ensure the health of the church in the long term;
- The Joint Board will be given power to appoint advisors and establish committees that include non-board members to draw on competencies not present on the board;
- Diversity: The church is a tapestry of diversity. The church needs to be attentive to that diversity and have it represented within its governance structures. To that end the Regional Churches will make it a work together to represent that diversity within their leadership bodies and on the Joint Board.

Joint Board Functions and Powers

The Joint Board will have the usual powers of such groups—providing overall leadership to MC Canada, acting on behalf of MC Canada, appointing and supervising the Executive Minister, and many more, all of which will be set out in the by-laws. More importantly for the life of the church, the Joint Board on behalf of the congregations and Regional Churches, will be called on to:

- Fulfill the mission of MC Canada as it implements national priorities and supports congregations and Regional Churches in their mission;
- Between Annual Meetings, continue discerning the national priorities regarding the ways that MC Canada participates with congregations and Regional Churches in God's work.

Board Process and Accountability

The Joint Board is accountable to the Annual Meeting. The Joint Board will have as its primary focus the governance of MC Canada. This represents a shift from the General Board in the past which had a greater focus on programme given the allocation of board positions to the Councils. In the new structure the focus of the board will be on the larger questions of purpose, vision, and direction.

Board Meetings

The Board will meet in person at least four times a year. Once will be in conjunction with the AGM. The others will take place at times to be determined.

Executive Staff Group

The Executive Staff Group (made up of the executive staff of the Regional Churches, and the Executive Minister of MC Canada) will meet regularly to ensure coordination at the staff level. The Executive Minister of MC Canada will chair the ESG. The ESG will act on behalf of the board.

Functions

The ESG is responsible for:

- Promoting the spiritual health of the church and the collective mission of the Regional Churches;
- Regular monitoring of priorities and performance;
- Attention to new initiatives that may be called for;
- Ensuring coordination among Regional Churches on national priorities;
- Mutual support;
- Attention to the system and its good functioning;
- Financial monitoring of the system;
- Advise the Joint Board;
- Preparation of reports and budgets.

Membership

The ESG is made up of:

- Executive Director or Executive Minister of each Regional Church;
- Executive Minister and Associate Executive Minister of MC Canada;
- The Executive Minister of MC Canada chairs the ESG.

Accountability

- The ESG is accountable to the Board of MC Canada through the Executive Minister of MC Canada.
- The members of the ESG individually are accountable to their own Boards.

Regional Churches

The bylaws of the Regional Churches will require some amendment to ensure coordination between MC Canada structure and Regional Church structure.

NATIONAL SHARED PRIORITIES

In the meetings of the Interim Council and the Executive Staff Group, a set of shared national priorities has been identified. Some of these priorities will be carried out by MC Canada, others will be carried out by the Regional Churches, either directly or by supporting their congregations. The priorities are:

- Canadian Witness and Relationships;
- International Witness and Relationships;
- Leadership Development;
- Higher Education;
- Support Services;
- Integrated Communication;
- Resources and Resource Sharing;
- Church Engagement;
- Executive Oversight.

The following section provides an outline of how each of these priorities will be handled within the new structure, as well as what tasks are within each priority area.

Canadian Witness Relations:

Mission is central to the life and work of the church at all levels. For the church to speak into the 21st century context, for congregations to connect missionally as an Anabaptist voice into their surrounding communities is also critical to what it means for the church to be the church.

A critical piece of what it means to do mission in Canada is to recognize that we live and work on the lands of indigenous peoples, and to be grateful to and for our indigenous brothers and sisters.

This priority seeks to support congregations, the Regional Churches, and the National Church in engaging missionally within the Canadian context.

International Witness Relations:

MC Canada's international Church partners frequently request for assistance as they seek to live missionally in their context. Partnering with Anabaptist churches around the world, engaging with the global Anabaptist church in mutual ministry is also critical to what it means for the church to be the church.

This priority seeks to support congregations, the Regional Churches, and the National Church in engaging missionally with the global church through Mennonite World Conference.

Leadership Development

The church depends on its leaders. It depends on forming new leaders for its ongoing life. It depends on leaders who are highly skilled, particularly now as the shifting 21st century context destabilizes the traditional ways of being church.

This priority focuses on the crucial task of ongoing formation and training of existing leaders and the identification, formation, and credentialing of new leaders for the church as it faces the challenges ahead.

Higher Education

The four institutions for higher education associated with Mennonite Church Canada (Columbia Bible College, Canadian Mennonite University, Conrad Grebel University College, and Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary) play numerous roles for the church. These include training for formal leadership in the church, training for informal church leadership, spiritual formation, and missional engagement both through training students to think theologically in various disciplines, and in being an Anabaptist voice on a secular campus.

This priority seeks create space for conversation among the schools, as well as assisting with promotion and financial assistance for the schools.

Integrated Communication

Communication plays a central role for the church. It lets us know what other parts of the body are doing. It creates a platform for discussion of important questions for the life of the church. It helps us work together. It allows us to let the world beyond the church know who we are, why we are here, what we do, and what we offer. Good communication inspires us, challenges us, invites us to new ways of engaging the world.

This priority seeks to create the platforms for all this to occur, and it helps us in shaping the face of the church that the world sees.

Resources and Resource Sharing

For the church to live its mission, it requires resources. Resources that help us in worship. Resources that help us in faith formation. Resources that help us in thinking well about the church and its mission. Resources that help us tell our story.

This priority seeks to provide us with the resources we need to be the church—CommonWord, worship resources, archives, access to MennoMedia resources.

Support Services

While the church is the church, it is also an institution with structures and employees that assist the church in being the church. Those structures and employees need supports such as employee benefit plans, pension plans, HR resources, payroll systems, data collection, managing of Ministry Leadership Information forms as people search for ministry roles.

This priority seeks to ensure access to these supports that enable the church to engage missionally with confidence, knowing that foundational, operational needs are well looked after.

Church Engagement

Being the church together costs money. In a culture with declining institutional loyalty, fewer people automatically write cheques to the same organizations every month. This calls for staff who actively engage donors and potential donors to contribute so that the work we do together can be done.

This priority seeks to ensure that the financing is available to enable the National Church via the Regional Churches to provide the supports to congregations as they live their mission.

Executive Oversight

For the church to fulfil its mission, it requires experienced leaders who are able to strengthen the faithfulness and unity of the church. As an organization, the church needs wise leaders delegated by the board to ensure that it runs smoothly. In addition, these leaders carry relationships with other connected organizations.

This priority seeks to provide overall leadership to MC Canada so that the parts mesh smoothly and are able to provide the supports needed by congregations and Regional Churches. It also carries the relationships with organizations such as MWC, and Canadian ecumenical groups. It also provides opportunities for national gatherings of the church.

WHERE ARE THESE PRIORITIES LOCATED?

Priority	Location for leadership/conversation	Where this is lived
Canadian Witness and Relationships	MC Canada provides staff support	Congregations and Regional Churches engage in mission locally.
International Witness and Relationships	MC Canada provides staff support. Some Regional Churches may provide staff support	MC Canada provides some budget support of Witness workers. Congregations and clusters of congregations discern participation and provide financial support.
Leadership Development	MC Canada hosts the national conversation, as well as being responsible for the Congregation of Ministerial Leadership. It also ensures resources are available for leadership development, particularly on understanding the nature of leadership and ministerial ethics.	The Regional Churches provide the primary support for their leaders.
Higher Education	MC Canada hosts conversation, provides financial support to AMBS, and transition funding for CMU.	CBC continues to be owned and financially supported by MCBC. CGUC continues to be owned and financially supported by MCEC. CMU transitions to ownership and financial support by MCA, MCSK, MCM.
Support Services	MC Canada provides these services for congregations and Regional Churches	
Integrated Communication	MC Canada hosts the conversation that ensures consistency across the system	Most communication functions are carried out by Regional Churches .
Resources and Resource Sharing	MC Canada provides the platform for the sharing of resources.	The platform allows for the development of resources at all levels of the church that can be shared across the church.
Church Engagement	The function is carried out by Regional Churches	
Executive Oversight	MC Canada executive oversight is an MC Canada function	Regional Church executive staff work closely with each other and MC Canada executive staff through the Executive Staff Group.

STRENGTHENING OF REGIONAL CHURCHES

This proposal assumes a shift in congregational financial resources from the National to the Regional Churches. This shift will enable the Regional Churches to strengthen their ability support and provide resources to their congregations as they engage missionally in their communities.

In particular, there will be added capacity for the following

- Develop Experimental Initiative Fund;
- Strengthen/training disciple making capacity;
- Explore shared fundraising staff;
- Strengthen communication capacity;
- Provide necessary resources to fund Executive Staff Group.

FINANCIAL SHARING PRINCIPLES

Beginning in 2018 all congregational contributions for both Regional Church and Mennonite Church Canada programmes and priorities will be paid directly to the Regional Church. The Regional Churches are currently working with their congregational members to prepare for this transition.

Projections on congregational giving will be used to calculate Regional Church contributions to the National Church. Two models for doing this are under consideration. Final decision making regarding these models and final work on the revenue available to Regional Churches and MC Canada are awaiting projections for 2017 fiscal year income.

The final plan on financial sharing will also address the question of how individual giving to Regional Churches and MC Canada will handled. Current thinking is that giving to either a Regional Church or MC Canada be accounted for in a way that the benefit of the donation is to the Regional Church. Bequests are still under consideration.

BUDGET

Final numbers on congregational and individual contributions to MC Canada and the Area Churches are not yet available. This has made it impossible to prepare a realistic budget for the MC Canada. As a result, the budget is not part of this proposal and will not be available for the Spring AGMs. The budget will be worked on and will be available for the Special Assembly in October.

THE COVENANT

In 2008 a covenant was signed that governed the relationships among the Area Churches and MC Canada. The covenant clearly established a partnership of equals among the Area Churches and MC Canada. This covenant gave formal structure to these relationships and provided guidance for a number of issues in that relationship.

In the proposed structure MC Canada does not have independent existence apart from the Regional Churches. Rather, MC Canada exists as a partnership among the Regional Churches. As such, the Covenant then becomes a covenant among the Regional Churches to work together as MC Canada to carry out the shared priorities and programmes that they have developed.

The new covenant sets out the ways in which the Regional Churches agree to relate together to enable the smooth functioning of the entire system. The covenant does not actually create the legal structure for MC Canada. That is done by the by-laws and other legal documents. Rather the Covenant represents the promises made among the Regional Churches regarding their relationships.

Mennonite Church Canada is a covenanted partnership among:

Mennonite Church Alberta
Mennonite Church British Columbia
Mennonite Church Eastern Canada
Mennonite Church Manitoba
Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

1. The overall mission of the partnership is shaped by *Vision: Healing and Hope*, the movement of the Holy Spirit, and *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective.*

2. We understand this to mean that we:
    a. Keep Jesus at the center of our faith and to test our decisions against what it means to be faithful followers of Jesus;
    b. Rely on the Spirit to guide us in our discernment and to empower us to work together;
    c. Seek in all our work and decision making to strengthen congregations and Regional Churches to be communities of grace, joy, and peace; and,
    d. Assist congregations and Regional Churches to be agents of God's healing and hope in the world.

3. We covenant to:

    a. Uphold the vision, healing and hope statement;
    b. Strengthen a sense of Peoplehood;
    c. Bless and support each other's ministries as if they were our own and ensure the viability and strength of each Regional Church;
    d. Pray and discern and worship;
    e. Align ourselves to what God is doing in the world;
    f. Foster Anabaptist identity;
    g. Engage in Anabaptist witness locally and globally;
    h. Cherish our relationships with each other;
    i. Believe the best about each other;
    j. Identify national priorities through attention to the
        i) Needs identified by congregations
        ii) Needs identified in the Anabaptist global community; and,
    k. Share our resources to support these national priorities;
    l. Strengthen the diversity of our leadership bodies in the Regional Church and National Church structures, and to monitor the achievement of the diversity goals we set through policy.

Review and Changes

Any partner may call for a review of all or part of this covenant at any meeting of the Joint Board.

This covenant will be reviewed in its entirety one year after it is first signed and every three years thereafter.

Dated the _____ day of _____, 2017.

_____
Mennonite Church Alberta

_____
Mennonite Church British Columbia

_____
Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

_____
Mennonite Church Manitoba

_____
Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

OUTLINE OF THE BY-LAW

- Board
  - Composition
  - Term of office
  - Eligibility for board membership
  - Filling of vacancies
  - Meetings
    - Notice
    - Quorum
    - Voting
  - Establish committees as needed
  - Appoints Search Committee for ED
- Officers
  - Title and role
  - Term of office
  - Manner of appointment
- Annual Meeting
  - Composition
  - Powers
  - Nominating Committee
- Membership in Mennonite Church Canada
  - Who may be a member
  - How to become a member
  - Withdrawal, release, or expulsion of members
  - Meetings
    - Notice
    - Quorum
    - Voting
- Power to make, amend, or repeal bylaws
  - Does this reside with the Board or the Annual Meeting?

Submitted to Area Church Boards for Review
January 11, 2017

Appendix

Key Leadership Groups

Interim Council

Responsible for overall leadership of the transition process

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

Executive Staff Group

Primary working group for the transition process

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