

July 23, 2015

Dear Pastor/leader,

Greetings from the Mennonite World Conference Assembly in Harrisburg, Pa. Praise God for this wonderful week of worship and fellowship with our brothers and sisters from around the world.

I am writing to offer a brief update and, hopefully, some clarification. As I walk the halls and meet folks here at MWC, I am getting tons of questions about what occurred in our Joint Conference Executive Council (CEC) and Bishop Board (BB) meeting on Friday, July 17.

The purpose of the July 17 meeting was to prepare for regional meetings that will occur across the conference from August 15 to Sept 8. In a remarkable turn of events, the CEC and Bishop Board reached a unanimous agreement on a proposal to share in those regional meetings. Although it needs more work before it can be sent broadly to LMC constituency, I want to share with you the essence of our proposal and some details about how it fits into a decision-making process.

The Proposal:

To best strengthen LMC's shared future in God's missional calling, we will be proposing that LMC withdraw as an Area Conference of MC USA. We will also propose that a model be developed in which LMC congregations can maintain valued relationships with other groups that enhance the congregation's missional call and purpose. Even as LMC tends a strong conference identity, including governance, oversight, and accountability, LMC congregations will be free to network broadly in partnerships that pursue missional faithfulness.

For example, some LMC congregations may wish to maintain relational connections in MC USA. We are in conversation with MC USA about how that might be possible. Other LMC congregations may wish to network with Evana and more clarity will be emerging about how that can work. Other LMC congregations are already networking with various groups and that will continue. Hopefully, a well-differentiated LMC can make it possible for growing, collaborative partnership to emerge broadly across a diverse Anabaptist community.

The Process:

As soon as possible, hopefully by the end of next week, a document will be developed and sent out for distribution in LMC congregations. The document will explain the proposal and provide a bit of history and background information. All LMC members will be encouraged to study the material and attend one of the following regional meetings:

August 15	- Philadelphia	Vietnamese Mennonite Church
August 20	- Balt./Washington	New Life Mennonite Church

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August 27	- Lancaster County	Elizabethtown Mennonite Church
August 29	- Spanish Council	Lancaster Conference Office
September 1	- Lancaster County	Willow Street Mennonite Church
September 3	- North Penn	Agape Fellowship
September 5	- New York City	United Revival in Brooklyn
September 8	- Lancaster County	Garden Spot Village

A simple outline of the discernment process includes:

- Aug - Sept Bishops will share the proposal and seek feedback from LMC constituency in the regional meetings noted above.
- Sept 11 A joint meeting of the CEC and Bishop Board in which the feedback from the regional meeting will be considered.
- Sept 18 Interaction with credentialed leaders in the LMC Leadership Assembly
- Sept-Oct Feedback from credentialed leaders and LMC agencies will be considered
- Oct-Nov Board of Bishops and CEC will fine-tune and reframe the proposal into a recommendation to be sent to all credentialed leaders for affirmation and final approval.

A Call to Prayer:

Please extend to your people a call to prayer for God's leading in these important conversations. For some among us, these developments are being received as welcomed news. For others, they are a cause for deep grief. In all of our interactions in the days ahead, we need to be prayerful and respectful of all. Lets make every effort to be kind and charitable in all and to all.

May the mercy, grace, and peace of God be with us all.

Yours in Him,



L. Keith Weaver
Moderator