



Mennonite Church Canada 2017 Special Delegate Assembly

PROCLAIMING: Activity of the Spirit

299 New earth, heavens new

ALEXANDRA 56, 56, 56 with refrain

F Gm/F F C Am

1 New earth, heav - ens new, Spir - it
2 New love, mer - cies new, Spir - it
3 New minds, wis - dom new, Spir - it
4 New earth, heav - ens new, Spir - it

Cms C F Gm/F F

Covenant New:
Background to the Discernment Guide
In preparation for Special Assembly 2017 (Oct. 13-15)

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Introduction

This document supplements the Covenant New Report, providing both background information for those who are interested plus greater detail. It describes:

- The process to date, starting with the Future Direction Task Force,
- Gives fuller descriptions of the structure proposal,
- Describes in detail the underlying principles for the financial planning process,
- Gives some information on the way the report responds to input received in the feedback process, and
- Answers some of the frequently asked questions raised by the feedback process.

MC Canada Covenant New Process

Where did this come from and where is it going?

The story of Mennonite Churches in Canada is a story of constant change. This is true whether one looks at the Conference of Mennonites in Canada and its predecessors, or at the three Mennonite Conferences that merged to form Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada in 1988.

These groups, and the Congregations that formed them, all attended to their contexts and sought ways to respond in faithfulness. In some cases, these responses of faithfulness involved coming together to initiate new gatherings of Congregations. In some cases, they involved establishing new programs, whether for mission purposes or to establish educational institutions. In some cases, they involved integrating previously existing groups. In some cases, they involved coming together to form new independent organizations. In 1999 in St. Louis these responses involved a major restructuring that both merged conferences and then reorganized them into Canadian and US entities.

What can be said about all these decisions to make change, whether they were decisions that engendered only excitement, or whether they led to both excitement over new ventures and pain over losses, each change was an attempt to be faithful in response to changes inside and outside the church.

The current changes proposed for MC Canada are creating both excitement for new possibilities and pain at the losses that will follow. Just as in the past, these changes are attempts to be faithful in response to changes inside and outside the church.

Again, it must be recognized that there are those among us who question whether the change process reads the context correctly and whether the process is the right response. Crucially, those questioning the process are doing so as an act of faithfulness.

What then are the pressures that are driving the current proposal?

As in the past, they are both external and internal to the church.

Externally, as has been said in many ways and in many places, there are massive changes at work in the culture around us, including in the ways people relate to church, in the ways the church has lost its place in the culture.

The secularism of Canadian society has taken on new forms. It was not that long ago that much of our society knew the basics of the Christian story. Out of that knowledge they would choose for or against faith. Increasingly we live in a society where people don't know the basic outlines of the Christian story, and no longer look to either the church or to God in their crises. Increasingly they do not know what faith is for.

At the same time, there is a declining trust in institutions. The boomer generation and their parents saw institutions as the solution to social problems. In the context of the church, they built numerous institutions: relief agencies, mission agencies, financial institutions, schools, and colleges, and more. Increasingly we live in a culture that sees institutions as the cause of the problems we face: mission collusion in colonialism, financial institutions that participate in an economy that has destroyed the environment and driven many people into poverty.

The local food movement points to another important cultural shift. There is increasing interest in finding and buying food locally from small farmers. The rise of Community Supported Agriculture is one symbol of this shift. If the local food movement points in one direction, then the explosion of restaurants offering the cuisine of the world represents a shift to a deeper desire to connect beyond the local.

More broadly this points to a growing interest in involvement in the local community, in relationships in the local community, in making a difference to the lives of people in the local community. On the other hand, the pattern just described also points to an interest in the larger world. When media, including social media, bring the trials of a distant community to our attention, there is a desire to have an impact directly in that distant/local community. But what is important in this connection is the desire for relationships with people in the distant/local community.

These shifts, secularism, declining trust in institutions, the desire to connect relationally both locally and far away, can be read as a crisis for the church and its structures. Many do read it that way. But a crisis is also an opportunity for ministry:

- An opportunity to offer deeper connections than the coffee shop in the context of connection with a God who is beyond us.
- An opportunity to rethink church at all its levels in more relational, less organizational terms.
- An opportunity to deepen ecumenical relationships, including more ecumenical ministry.
- An emphasis on the local Congregation, and at the same time the possibility for deeper connections with other Mennonite World Conference member churches, as well as churches across the country.

IN A FEW WORDS

In the midst of a rapidly changing world the church has an opportunity to be a place of transformation as it finds its place at the margins of society.

Internally, there have been significant pressures on the church, some in response to the external pressures described above.

The general decline of trust in institutions contributes to a growing mistrust in the regional and nationwide levels of church structures, as well as mistrust in the structures of the local Congregation. Growing localism means that there is greater interest in what the local Congregation does and a corresponding loss of interest in what the other levels of the church are doing. In a culture where there are many more places to develop relationships, the Congregation can be replaced by the coffee shop.

These forces contribute to a decline in traditional patterns of engagement as well as money given to the larger structures and a corresponding decline in committed regular giving to the Congregation. This shift from committed involvement means that giving of time and money is driven more by marketing and by response to crises that enter our social media streams. All these forces contribute to a shift in what is meant by regular church attendance: from regular attendance being defined as weekly participation, it has come to mean attendance once per month.

Again, this narrative is often framed in terms of crisis. But this can also be read as an opportunity.

Without losing sight of the roles that the global, nationwide, and regional levels of the church play, a re-emphasis on the local Congregation as a place to build community, to engage in strengthening the surrounding community can be an opportunity for renewal.

In the context of declining commitment of time and money to the Congregation a refocus on the Congregation as a place of meaning, purpose and connection can transform congregational life.

IN A FEW WORDS

In the midst of changes in how people connect to church, Congregations have new opportunities to enhance their ability to be places meaning, purpose and connection for people, across the street and around the world.

What then should be the response?

Do we give in to the pressures, internal and external? Do we push back and insist that in the face of these pressures, we maintain the current structures? Landing on one or the other end of those polarities is not really an option. To simply throw our hands up in the air and say we will do whatever the culture around us demands is neither faithful nor prudent. But to throw up the ramparts and refuse to respond to the pressures around us is no more faithful or prudent.

The task is to recognize where to shift and where to say “No, to change here is to lose who we are.” This proposal seeks to walk that line. One example: for some people, the internal and external pressures toward the local would point to shuttering the doors at MC Canada. For others, the call would be to resist the pressure and to retain MC Canada and all its current programs. Rather than do either of these, this proposal [and the Future Directions Task Force (FDTF) Report and Addendum¹ that preceded it] asked what is essential for MC Canada to do in the context of these pressures.

IN A FEW WORDS

In a context where it is easy to make a binary choice between uncritically adapting to changes and allowing no change, the Future Directions Report and Addendum and this proposal seek to avoid the binary choice through making change while honouring the traditions of the church.

¹ See <http://www.commonword.ca/ResourceView/43/18226> and <http://www.commonword.ca/ResourceView/43/18591>

Where the Future Directions Final Report and Addendum point

The FDTF Final Report and Addendum point to a refocus on the Congregation as the local expression of the body of Christ, engaged in mission, ministry, and worship as it supports its members in their mission. It points to a refocus on the Vision: Healing and Hope statement as the primary statement of who we are as a church. It points to the centrality of Jesus, community, and reconciliation as the centres of our faith, our lives, and our work. It points toward the church as a countercultural community that leads to a new way of life.

As it does this, it also points toward a simplified structure for the regional and nationwide expressions of the church so that the Congregation can be empowered to live this vision, to be a church that exists for the world.

Implicit in this direction is that MC Canada remains as part of the Global Church, a place where Anabaptist identity is nurtured, and where we carry relationships of learning and support with Anabaptist brothers and sisters in other countries around the world.

IN A FEW WORDS

The FDTF Final Report and Addendum point to a church focused on the ministry, mission, and worship of the local Congregation, with the larger structures playing their role in a simplified structure.

Terminology

Formal structures

The Report uses terminology for various parts of the church structure that are different from current practice:

- Mennonite Church Canada remains as the legal name of the nationwide entity (informally known as MC Canada).
- Joint Council replaces General Board.
- Delegate Gathering replaces Delegate Assembly.
- Regional Church replaces Area Church.

These proposed names will be used throughout the Report and this document when the new proposed structure is being discussed. The current names will be used when referring to these entities as currently functioning.

Other terms

Casual terms for MC Canada

- Over the years there has developed a practice of sometimes referring to MC Canada as the “national church.” The use of national has been flagged by some as problematic, especially in discussion of identity. To speak of MC Canada as the holder of “national identity” too easily looks like it may have ties to nationalism. It is suggested that the term “Nationwide Church” be used instead.
- The term “Nationwide Church” will be used throughout this document and the Covenant New Report and Discernment Guide.

Church

- The word “church” has a complex life within the broader system of MC Canada. Prior to amalgamation in 1999, church usually referred to the Congregation, while “conference” was used to refer to the denominational bodies:
 - o Conference of Mennonites in Canada
 - o Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba
 - o Two of the predecessor bodies of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC) were, Western Ontario Mennonite Conference and Conference of United Mennonite Churches in Ontario
- In 1999 the decision was made to use the word “church” rather than “conference” for the denominational bodies. This was a theological statement about the church: all levels of the denomination are Church—Congregations, Area Churches and MC Canada.
- In this report, the word “church” will mean any level of the denomination or may refer to multiple levels of the denomination, including reference to Mennonite World Conference (MWC) as the global church, depending on the context.

The Vision

The Future Directions Task Force Report and Addendum are grounded in three parallel visions, visions that continue to drive the ongoing work of the Covenant New process.

First, our 1995 vision statement, *Vision: Healing and Hope*, remains a powerful articulation of the nature of the church and the task of the church as it lives into its participation in God's mission in the world. The first part of the statement is the most well known, and most frequently quoted. The additional three sections add commentary that help to make clear the implications of the first section.

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.
- To follow Jesus Christ more faithfully, we are called to: enrich our prayer, worship, and study of the Scriptures; offer all that we are and have to God.
- To grow as communities of grace, joy, and peace, we want to: call and nurture congregational leaders for ministry in a changing environment; practice love, forgiveness, and hospitality that affirm our diversity and heal our brokenness.
- To live as people of healing and hope we are committed to: invite others to faith in Jesus Christ; seek God's peace in our homes, work, neighborhoods, and the world.

As the FDTF Final Report and Addendum suggest, this task is a congregational task. Congregations are called to each be part of this vision. When the FDTF Final Report and Addendum speak of the Congregation as the primary unit of the church, and of the Congregation as the place of ministry, mission, and worship, it is speaking of the Congregation as the place where most of us strive to live *Vision: Healing and Hope*.

But living this vision is not a congregational task only. This is also a task for the Regional Churches and for the Nationwide Church. These bodies do this in part through the work of supporting congregational life. They also do it by virtue of being a way for Congregations to engage together to live this vision in ways bigger than any single Congregation can. This may be through clusters of Congregations, it may be through Regional Church program, or it may be through Regional Churches collaborating at the nationwide level.

While the articulation of a vision for the global Anabaptist community of Mennonite World Conference is in different words, we also live this vision of healing and hope in our relationships with our sisters and brothers around the world.

One way that a vision statement functions is as a way to test what we should be doing together. Does a particular initiative further the vision? Answering this question can help in deciding what we ought to do together and what we ought not to do. This will be an ongoing task as the church continues to learn how to live into its vision.

IN A FEW WORDS

Vision: Healing and Hope continues and will continue to animate the work of Congregations, Regional Churches, MC Canada, and our relationship to our sisters and brothers in MWC, as well as providing the standard against which we test what we should be doing together.

Secondly, the FDTF Report and Addendum identify the local Congregation as the "primary setting for worship, witnessing to our faith as intergenerational and intercultural communities, and working together to embody God's justice, peace, and reconciliation." While there has been some pushback on the articulation of the Congregation as primary, the fact remains that the local Congregation is the place where we have our first connection to church. It is the place where we learn to live as followers of Jesus. It is the place where we first learn to live as part of a community of faith. It is the place where we first learn to engage in mission. It is the place where we raise our children to be followers of Jesus. It is the place where we gather for our most frequent experience of worship.

Third, the Report and Addendum envision a strong, though smaller, MC Canada as a partnership of the Regional Churches, that addresses issues of nationwide importance and leads in shaping a sense of nationwide identity as a Mennonite people in Canada. Again, there has been concern expressed throughout the work of the FDTF, and in the Covenant New process since then, that this process means the end of the Nationwide Church and the end of a sense of a nationwide peoplehood. MC Canada will be different if this proposal is accepted. MC Canada is not going away, and it will continue to play an important role as the nationwide expression of the work that the Regional Churches do together. It will continue to play an important role in the life of the congregational members of the Regional Churches.

IN A FEW WORDS

The FDTF Report and Addendum envision a church where healthy Congregations engage in God's mission in the world, Regional Churches support Congregations and MC Canada helps to hold us together as a diverse nationwide people.

The Culture Shift

The Covenant New process (and the FDTF Final Report and Addendum that lie behind it) can be read as being primarily about structure. That they certainly are. But underlying the structure recommendations are pointers toward a culture shift. While structure change is hard, shifting a culture is especially hard. Yet that is what the Final Report and Addendum and the Covenant New process are calling us to.

The culture shift can be described in the following themes, with attendant structure changes:

- 1) Refocus around the mission of God:
 - a) Increasingly seeing the church not as an institution that exists for self preservation, but as a community of God's people that offers itself for the sake of the world.
 - b) Increasing attention is paid to ways to enable all levels of the church to turn their faces to the world.
- 2) Reorientation to the local Congregation:
 - a) Increasing attention is paid by Regional Churches to congregational vitality.
 - b) Increasing emphasis on tying support for international ministry to congregational energy and discernment.
- 3) Shift in allocation of resources and program among Nationwide Church and the Regional Churches:
 - a) All fundraising is through the Regional Churches.
 - b) Financial sharing among the Regional Churches.
 - c) Even when program is administered nationally, the priorities are set by the partnership of Regional Churches.
- 4) Focus on the Regional Churches to support the Congregation in its work and link Congregations to the Nationwide Church:
 - a) Regional Churches governed by Congregations through delegates.
 - b) Program allocated among Regional Churches and Nationwide Church, with some program shifted to the Regional Churches.
 - c) Regional Churches focus on mission formation, supporting pastoral leaders, congregational health, worship, and fellowship.
- 5) The Nationwide Church as the speaker for the whole at the direction of the Regional Churches and as the holder of identity as defined by the collective of Regional Churches and Congregations:
 - a) The Nationwide Church is governed directly by the Regional Churches through the Delegate Gathering and a Joint Council made up of 2 members from each Regional Church and 3 officers elected by the Delegate Gathering of MC Canada.
 - b) Delegate Gathering is made up of Regional Church board members and other delegates appointed by Regional Churches.
 - c) National gatherings for connection, worship, and study.
 - d) Community of Spiritual Leadership to meet for connection and learning.
- 6) Staff Role
 - a) Greater emphasis on staff leadership under direction of Joint Council.
- 7) Shift in Decision Making:
 - a) More decision making at the Regional Church level, with Joint Council offering recommendations to Regional Churches.
 - b) Joint Council responds to priorities identified by the Regional Churches.
- 8) Program tied more closely to congregational energy and discernment:
 - a) Congregations are part of the process for discerning involvement with International Witness projects.
 - b) Congregations speak into nationwide agenda through Regional Churches.

IN A FEW WORDS

The FDTF Final Report and Addendum and this proposal are grounded in a culture shift that refocuses the church around the mission of God, the local Congregation supported by the Regional Churches, and the Nationwide Church supporting Congregations and holding the whole together.

Structure

Structure is a container. It does not exist for itself, rather it exists to create the organizational space for the organization's vision and mission to be lived.

What follows is a detailed description of the proposed structure for MC Canada. As you read this you are invited to see what it means for the Church to be a community and communities of healing and hope.

Overview

	Current Structure	Proposed Change	How it is Different	Implications
Congregations	As exists now	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 their Congregations will be needed.
Regional Churches	As exists now	Regional Churches are the key support to Congregations as they seek to move to greater vitality.	The Nationwide Church plays a reduced role in direct connection to the Congregations as the Regional Church role is strengthened. MC Canada provides system wide supports as discerned by the Regional Churches.	Congregations will give to the Regional Churches, and MC Canada funding will flow from them. Represents a shift in financial resources flowing to the Nationwide through the Regional Churches.

	Current Structure	Proposed Change	How it is Different	Implications
Covenant	Signed by MC Canada and 5 Area Churches, but remain distinct entities.	Signed by 5 Regional Churches to create MC Canada.	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.
Membership in MC Canada	Area Churches and Congregations are members of MC Canada.	Area Churches become known as Regional Churches and are members of the nationwide entity called MC Canada.	Congregations are members of their Regional Church only.	Congregations speak into regional and shared nationwide/ international agenda through the Regional Churches which speak directly into nationwide and international agenda.
MC Canada Joint Council	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 Council is made up of Regional Church Moderators, one additional member appointed by each Regional Church, and 3 officers (Moderator, Vice-Moderator and Secretary/Treasurer) who are elected by Delegate Gathering.	The majority of the members of Joint Council are Regional Church appointees and have no program responsibility.	The primary result is that the Joint Council is less program focused and more governance focused. In addition, it is more clearly accountable to the Regional Churches through the Boards and Delegate Assemblies of the Regional Churches.

	Current Structure	Proposed Change	How is it Different	Implications
Nationwide Priorities	MC Canada Board discerns nationwide direction for approval through its Delegate Assembly. Area Church Boards discern their direction for approval by their Delegate Assemblies.	Nationwide priorities are shaped by the discernment of the Regional Church Boards and Delegate Assemblies which are then clarified through the Joint Council and Delegate Gathering of MC Canada, with ongoing input by the Regional Church representatives at 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 nationwide priorities are named and developed by the Regional Churches working together.	The nationwide voice becomes the voice of the regions speaking collectively, rather than having a separate voice.
MC Canada Delegate Gathering	The members of MC Canada (both Congregations and Area Churches) appoint delegates to the Delegate Assembly. The number of delegates permitted is proportional to the size of Congregations and Area Churches. The maximum number of delegates possible is around 500 congregational reps and 38 Area Church reps.	The Regional Churches send participants to the Delegate Gathering. These participants include 6 Board Members plus members at large. The number of members at large is set by a formula. In addition, the second Joint Council members appointed by each Regional Church are Delegates.	There are no congregational representatives at the nationwide Delegate Gathering. The gatherings are much smaller. All attendees at the Delegate Gathering, other than the MC Canada officers, are representatives of their Regional Churches.	Congregations have input through the Regional Churches, giving them increased voice. This presumes that Congregations have input at their Regional Church. The nationwide meetings are smaller. Voices speaking at the Delegate Gathering 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 naming conventions are proposed:

Current Structure	New Structure
General Board	Joint Council
Delegate Assembly	Delegate Gathering
Area Church	Regional Church
Mennonite Church Canada	Mennonite Church Canada
Informal Name: National Church	Informal Name: Nationwide Church

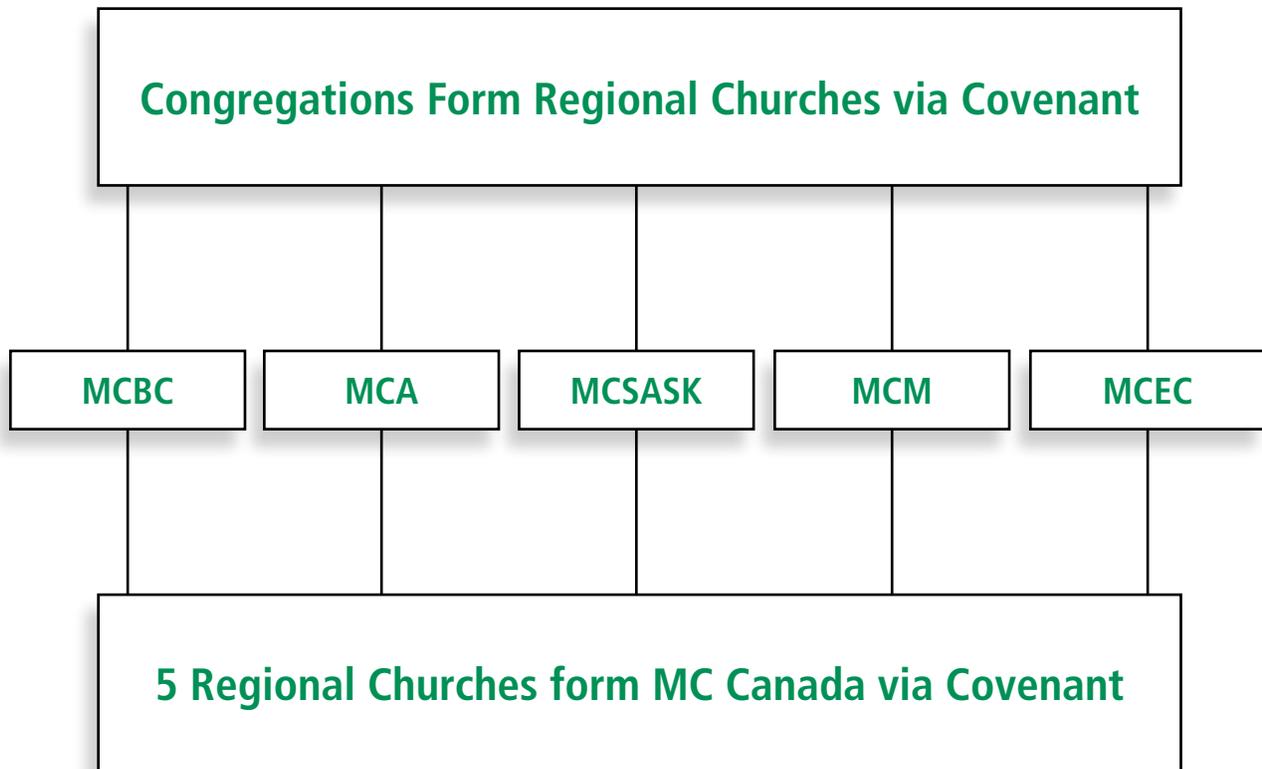
Diversity

Diversity within the various leadership groups of the church at all its levels was a repeated question and a recurring conversation throughout the Covenant New process. It will continue to be taken into account as the next steps are taken after Special Assembly.

The shifts that take place will be complex. Both currently and if this proposal is accepted, the main leadership bodies of MC Canada will have their members appointed by Regional Churches. Assuring diversity in the Nationwide Church bodies requires that the Regional Churches attend to diversity in their own leadership groups and in choosing members for the Delegate Gatherings and the Joint Council.

The goal as envisioned in this proposal is that the leadership groups are representative of the tapestry of diversity that is present across and among MC Canada Congregations. To that end the Regional Churches will make it a priority to work together to represent that diversity within their leadership bodies and on the Delegate Gathering and Joint Council.

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 (called Area Church Only members).

In the proposed structure, the Regional Churches will be the only members of MC Canada. Congregations speak into issues at the nationwide 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 nationwide 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;

- Nationwide priorities are established through the Regional Church board and delegate assembly structures. This ensures a strong voice for Congregations in priority setting at the nationwide 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 nationwide level in three ways:

- Regional Churches will appoint representatives to the Joint Council of MC Canada;
- Regional Churches will appoint representatives to the Delegate Gathering of MC Canada;
- The Executive Staff of the Regional Churches will meet regularly with the Executive Minister of MC Canada to ensure the good functioning of the system at the staff level.

IN A FEW WORDS

Regional Churches are members of MC Canada and send representatives to MC Canada leadership groups.

Delegate Gathering

Delegate Gathering Membership

Six members of each Regional Church Board will be members of the MC Canada Delegate Gathering. It is assumed that the Regional Churches will appoint their Moderator as one of the six board members that they send. In addition, the Regional Churches will appoint their second Joint Council member as one of their complement of delegates.

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 current estimated delegate numbers will be as follows:

Regional Church	Current Members	Delegates by Membership	Base Number	Current Board Members	Current # Delegates
MC Canada Officers				3	3
MCBC	3377	4	5	6	15
MC M	8400	9	5	6	20
MC A	1400	2	5	6	13
MCEC	15000	15	5	6	26
M SK	2900	3	5	6	14
Totals	30777	33	25	33	91

Delegate Gathering Functions and Powers

The Delegate Gathering 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 Delegate Gathering, as a gathering of Regional Church representatives speaking on behalf of their congregational members, will be called on to:

- Discern together the nationwide priorities regarding the ways that MC Canada participates with Congregations and Regional Churches in God’s work;
- Discern together regarding the health of the church;
- Consider issues facing the church;
- Provide input and advice to the Joint Council and to the church 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 nationwide and global level;

- Assist the process of resource sharing among Congregations, Regional Churches, and the Nationwide Church so that congregational life is supported;
- Approve major policy changes;
- Approve major theological statements.

Delegate Gathering Process

The Delegate Gathering is the primary governance structure of MC Canada. It delegates the Joint Council to act on its behalf in carrying out the mission of the church. The Joint Council is accountable to the Delegate Gathering.

Motions on significant issues can be brought by delegates to the Delegate Gathering in ways similar to the way the Resolution on the Doctrine of Discovery, and the Resolution on Palestine and Israel came to the Assembly in 2016.

Meetings

The Delegate Gathering will take place in conjunction with other gatherings of the church such as study conferences, or meetings of the Community of Spiritual Leadership. This is so that non-delegates attending those gatherings will have the opportunity to be present at the Delegate Gathering. Those who are not members of the Delegate Gathering will have floor privileges in order to speak to issues under consideration, but will not have voting rights.

Backgrounder page 18 just before the Nominating committee replace the two line paragraph with:

The Delegate Gathering as described above will meet every two years. In alternate years the members of the Joint Council will act as the Delegate Gathering similar to the current structure.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee will report to the Delegate Gathering. It will be made up of one representative of each Regional Church and will prepare the list of candidates for the Officers for the Joint Council for approval by the Delegate Gathering.

IN A FEW WORDS:

The Delegate Gathering is made up of representatives of the Regional Churches and is responsible for the overall functioning of MC Canada.

Joint Council

Joint Council Membership

The moderators of all five Regional Churches will be members of the Joint Council. In addition, each Regional Church will appoint an additional member to the Joint Council, who is not a member of the Regional Church Board. The MC Canada Delegate Gathering will elect three officers (Moderator, Vice Moderator, and Secretary/Treasurer). 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, the Nominating Committee will ensure that no more than one shall be from any one Regional Church.

Joint Council Functions and Powers

The Joint Council 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 Council on behalf of the Congregations and Regional Churches, will be called on to:

- Fulfill the purpose of MC Canada as it implements nationwide priorities and supports Congregations and Regional Churches in their mission;
- Between Delegate Gatherings, continue discerning the nationwide priorities regarding the ways that MC Canada participates with Congregations and Regional Churches in God's work.

Joint Council Process and Accountability

The Joint Council is accountable to the Delegate Gathering. The Joint Council 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 program given the allocation of Joint Council positions to the Councils. In the new structure, the focus of the Joint Council will be on the larger questions of purpose, vision, and direction.

Joint Council Meetings

The Joint Council will meet at least four times a year. At least two of these meetings will have all members in a single location, while the others may be done through conferencing technology. One face to face meeting will be in conjunction with the Delegate Gathering. The others will take place at times to be determined.

IN A FEW WORDS:

The Joint Council is made up of two people from each Regional Church, the Moderator and one other member who is not a member of the Regional Church Board. The Delegate Gathering elects three officers. The Joint Council provides supervision of the Executive staff and is responsible for the good functioning of MC Canada.

Executive Committee of Joint Council

Functions

The Executive Committee will address issues between meetings of the Joint Council. The matters that the Executive Committee is empowered to address will be limited to:

- Emergency matters that cannot wait for the next Joint Council meeting
- Test recommendations prior to presentation to the Joint Council
- Human resources and other confidential matters

In addition, the Executive Committee will be a place for the Executive Minister to consult on issues for which the Executive Minister desires additional wisdom.

Membership

The Executive Committee will be made up of the three officers of MC Canada and one other member of Joint Council who is not a Regional Church Moderator and is chosen by Joint Council.

Accountability

The Executive Committee is accountable to the Joint Council and will report on its activities at each Joint Council meeting, subject to any confidentiality issues.

IN A FEW WORDS

The Executive Committee of the Joint Council deals with emergency matters, matters that require confidentiality, and tests recommendations prior to presentation to the Joint Council.

Executive Staff Group

The Executive Staff Group (ESG) will meet regularly to enable coordination at the staff level. The Executive Minister of MC Canada will chair the ESG.

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;
- Enabling coordination among Regional Churches on nationwide priorities;
- Mutual support;
- Attention to the entire MC Canada system and its good functioning;
- Financial monitoring of the system;
- Advising the Joint Council;
- Preparation of reports and budgets.

Membership

The ESG is made up of:

- Executive Director or Executive Minister of each Regional Church;
- Executive Minister of MC Canada;

Accountability

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

IN A FEW WORDS:

The ESG enables good coordination among the Regional Churches and the partnership that is MC Canada.

Regional Churches

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

Financial Planning Principles

What are the core principles driving the Covenant New process?

Resourcing Congregations

Core to the Covenant New process has been a commitment to Congregations having the resources for their engagement in mission that extends beyond internal nurture and worship. The goal is to enable Congregations to step more deeply into congregational witness in their communities, and to support individual members in doing the same.

In the context of the local Congregation as the basic unit of the church, it is important to note that the Regional Churches are called into being by the Congregations. The Regional Churches on behalf of their Congregations call MC Canada into being.

Congregations have indicated their desire to be more closely connected to the mission of the church at all levels. This calls for equipping/inspiring/training Congregations to be more missional in their engagement with their local, regional, and global neighbours. This then means that there needs to be allocation of resource dollars to whatever best supports congregational vitality and mission.

Ownership of the work of the Nationwide Church

Given that the Regional Churches call MC Canada into being, ownership of the work of the Nationwide Church belongs to the Regional Churches. Structurally the face-to-face relationship between Congregations and the larger structures is held by the Regional Church. The goal is greater ownership of nationwide agenda by the Congregations through the Regional Churches. This calls for greater collaboration among the Regional Churches, including a broader sharing of discernment and resources across the country. This then results in a governance structure with a smaller group of people, but engagement and discernment by more people within their Regional Churches.

At the same time, there has been a strong call in the Covenant New process to strengthen the sense of being part of a nationwide community. This calls for resourcing ways to foster connections among Congregations across the country.

Fiscal sustainability

If the larger structures are called into being by Congregations, it follows that Congregations are the primary source for funding the ministry we are called to do together. This means that congregational giving is the primary source for determining budgets at the regional and nationwide levels. The budgeting process is built on reliable patterns of historic giving. It is recognized that in the transition period ascertaining what is a reliable projection based on historic giving is a difficult task.

While congregational giving is the core of the budget process, individuals with a passion for a certain type of ministry are encouraged to provide financial support aside from congregational giving.

What is the story we want our Financial plan to tell?

God calls us into community, to be a people together

The primary story we want the budget to tell is that God calls us into community, to be a people together, congregationally, regionally, nationally, globally.

In this context we affirm that, at all four levels of the church:

- God continues to move in our midst calling people to new life.
- God continues to move in our midst calling leaders to mission and pastoral ministry.
- God continues to move in our midst calling people to explore their faith in a way that is integrated into their lives.

The God who calls us is a God of relationships, who approaches us and calls us in love, in honesty, and in integrity.

Building relationships

While the Covenant New process affects structure, the primary interest in making these changes is not in building an institution for its own sake. Rather the goal is building relationships locally, regionally, nationally, and globally. The structures that are built are meant to be containers to hold these relationships.

Central to this relationship building is enabling greater congregational ownership in being a nationwide Mennonite people, engaged in relationships at all four levels. The nationwide structure is meant to serve our Regional Churches, who are serving our Congregations in building and maintaining these relationships.

Smaller Regional Churches have new opportunities to engage in resourcing

One of the realities of our structure is a significant difference in resources among the Regional Churches. MCEC, by far the largest Regional Church, has close to 50% of the individual members of the Nationwide Church, as well as having close to 50% of the Congregations. At the other extreme, MCA has about 1400 members, less than 10% of the size of MCEC.

There is similar disparity in the ability of the Regional Churches to fund the resources that their congregational members require. By building a financial plan that takes these realities into account, the smaller Regional Churches will have access to increased resources for providing for their Congregations' needs.

Future orientation

The financial plan is designed with the future in mind. The goal is to allow greater flexibility and adaptability in relation to emerging needs or agenda. It does thus by releasing money for special initiatives. At the same time, it envisions fewer full time staff at the nationwide level. New initiatives will be developed through contract staff positions to bring in the needed expertise while maximizing flexibility to respond to shifts in funding.

Sustainable and responsible.

Overly optimistic income projections would risk shortfalls and the non-strategic release of staff. Overly pessimistic projections that might be exceeded, would leave bare bones program and the possibility of an end of year surplus. Neither of these scenarios would be responsible planning.

The financial plan is therefore fiscally conservative to minimize the risks of not being able to meet staff and program commitments. At the same time, it leaves the church positioned to support growth as vision and mission are engaged and funds are committed.

What are the implications of those principles and that narrative for how we approach budgeting in a multi-level system?

Congregational engagement

Everything the nationwide body does needs to have a direct link to local congregational ministry and congregational engagement. The Covenant New process operates on the principle that the Regional Churches are called into being by the Congregations, and that the Nationwide Church is called into being by the Regional Churches. The implication is that the agenda for those bodies is ultimately shaped by what the Congregations call on them to do and what the Congregations commit to doing through their financial contributions, as well as energy, time, passion, talents, volunteerism, encouragement, prayer support, and enthusiasm.

Given this, the financial plan is built, first and foremost, on congregational contributions. Any additional money collected from individuals is used for specific ministries and as seed money for new projects that fall into the mandate of the Regional Churches and the Nationwide Church.

System focus

As the Regional Churches and the Nationwide Church develop their budgets, they look to the whole church and to the health of the system as a whole. This is rooted in the principle that the work done by all levels of the church is a shared mission with shared accountability, and a shared covenant.

Shared financial commitment

What flows from this is a question as to what is the fair share of the financial load to be carried at the congregational and the regional level. This means that we attend to the balance between regions and between the regions and the Nationwide Church.

Mutual support

Core to this approach to funding and ministry is that we are present for each other among the Regional Churches and across the Nationwide Church. We are looking out for each other. We desire that each Congregation, each Regional Church, and the Nationwide Church be the best that we can be as followers of Jesus, as communities of healing and hope.

What will animate this story?

Regional Churches

As noted above, one goal of the change process is to enable each of the Regional Churches to have the funding needed to have the core staff members and program needed for them to support their Congregations. In addition, there is the goal of ensuring resources for additional staff and/or program in the smaller Regional Churches.

This process was made complex by the fact that different regional Churches prioritize programs in different ways. For example, some, but not all, Regional Churches include their camps in their budgets, including any budgetary shortfalls for the camps.

The financial planning process ensured that each Regional Church would retain enough funds to:

- Have at least one full time person to cover Regional Church Minister/Executive minister role
- Hire Church Engagement staff

MC Canada

The core functions of MC Canada that will continue are:

- International Witness: this includes some staff to oversee program and funding for projects.
- Executive Office: this includes the executive (including travel), memberships in ecumenical organizations, MWC membership and some program costs.
- Anabaptist Resources: This includes some staff, program cost, CommonWord, and Archives.
- Support Services: this includes an executive assistant, pension and benefits administration, event planning, and occupancy costs.
- Communications: this includes some communication staff, program costs, and the grant to *Canadian Mennonite*.
- Canadian Witness: this is staff and program cost.
- Leadership Development: maintaining the Ministerial Leadership Inventory database, some support and resourcing of pastors.

Appendix 1

Comments, Questions, and Challenges Raised in the Consultation Process

During the consultation process after the publication of the draft proposal, several sets of questions and challenges about the structure were identified. These included the following concerns:

- A weakening of congregational voice
- A weakening of national voice
- The distribution of power among the Regional Churches
- Diversity in the delegate bodies and Joint Councils
- Accountability
- Creation of Regional Church silos
- The need for an enforceable commitment to unity
- The method the Regional Churches use to select their delegates
- The need for careful delineation of the roles of each level of the church

Responding to the concerns

National/Congregational Voice

This is a complex pair of concerns. On the one hand, some see in the proposed structure a weakening of congregational voice. Because Congregations are no longer represented at MC Canada delegate assemblies, the fear is that their voice is lost. On the other hand, there is a concern that the new structure weakens the voice of MC Canada in speaking for the whole.

Transition leaders have tried to communicate two perspectives in response to these concerns:

- The new structure strengthens congregational voice. By having issues of national importance on the agendas of Regional Church assemblies, a larger number of Congregations are able to speak into these issues. It is recognized that the effectiveness of this input is dependent on the Regional Church attending to and carrying that input to meetings of Executive Staff Group, Joint Council and Delegate Gatherings.
- The new structure does not dilute the voice of MC Canada, and may strengthen it. In much of the listening done throughout the future directions process, there have been comments that indicate an us/them attitude regarding MC Canada. MC Canada is seen by some as a “them” that imposes things on “us” in “our regions or our Congregations.” In the new structure, MC Canada exists as a partnership among the Regional Churches. That means that when it speaks it does so on behalf of the “us” that are the Congregations as our voices

speaking into the nationwide agenda through the Regional churches.

It is acknowledged that not all agree with this assessment of the new structure. Only time will tell if the structure will work as anticipated.

Power Distribution

There are certain distinct realities in MC Canada: Mennonite Church Eastern Canada has close to 50% of the church members within MC Canada, has the largest staff of all the Regional Churches, and has significantly more financial resources than the other Regional Churches. One implication is that in a structure that is proportionately representative, MCEC would have significant power to drive the agenda and the outcomes.

On the other hand, a system that apportions representation equally among the Regional Churches would mean that MCEC’s concerns can be effectively marginalized.

The complexity of balancing these perspectives is not new to this proposal. In the current structure, if every Congregation sent its full complement of delegates, MCEC and its Congregations would have between 40% and 50% of delegates. However, we know that doesn’t happen and at 2016 Assembly MCEC had 33% of the delegates.

This proposal seeks to walk a middle road, neither apportioning delegates strictly proportionally nor doing it through equal representation for each Regional Church. It seeks to both recognize the larger size of MCEC, while also giving strong voice to the other Regional Churches.

Diversity in the delegate bodies and Joint Councils

This question was raised repeatedly in many of the venues for feedback: EVI workshops, Area Church Delegate Gatherings, and online. It is a difficult question, made more difficult by the fact that we are a representative system of governance. Neither now nor under the proposed structure does MC Canada appoint the delegates to the Assembly/ Delegate Gathering. Similarly, in both the current and the proposed system not all General Board/Joint Council members are elected by the Assembly.

In representational systems such as this, the question of diversity cannot be addressed only by MC Canada. It is also a question for Regional Churches as they select their representatives. For Special Assembly, this is also a question for Congregations as they select their delegates.

Furthermore, assuring diversity in governance structures

cannot depend strictly on the goodwill of the individual decision makers. Ensuring ongoing diversity requires that clear expectations and commitments are made by all. Enabling the full diversity of the church to be part of leadership groups also calls for change that removes barriers to participation.

Just ensuring that leadership groups embody the range of differences within the church is not the full story. The gift of diversity is not just that we look different and think different, but that a range of viewpoints and ways of thinking are part of the deliberations. This calls for the valuing of those viewpoints and ways of thinking that have not historically been present in the leadership groups of the Church. Ultimately it means that the word “us” includes the full diversity of people and their viewpoints and ways of thinking.

To that end, Interim Council has made a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion that involves engaging people with expertise in the field to guide its work.

Accountability/Silos

There were a number of comments in the feedback process that raised the question of accountability within the structure. While it is not always clear what context was being referred to, it is clear that this is a concern. In some cases, the reference seemed to be the accountability of national staff and General Board, perhaps to the Area Churches or to Assembly. In some cases, it seemed that accountability of the Area Church staff and boards to larger structures was the concern. In some cases, it seemed to be accountability of pastors to some larger structure that was the issue.

Apart from specifics, it is clear that accountability is a concern. Perhaps what can be said is that these comments speak to a concern that parts of the system might become autonomous, acting without reference to other parts of the system.

Another way this concern was named in the feedback was in terms of a fear that in the proposed structure the Regional Churches could end up as separate silos, moving in different directions, with no mechanism to bring them together. At its most extreme this is a fear for the fracturing of the whole, with the ultimate demise of MC Canada.

First it must be recognized that the current structure does not seem to have the mechanisms to hold the system together, apart from relational commitments. Witness the post BFC anxiety about the possible departure of one of the Area Churches.

The response to this concern comes in two parts:

- Legal Structure:
 - o The current by-laws provide for removal of a member through a recommendation of the General Board after attempts to resolve differences have failed. That recommendation would go to Assembly which has the power to remove an Area Church from membership. The current by-laws have no specific provision for members to withdraw their membership in MC Canada.
 - o The suggested response to the concerns above is continuation of the current process of conflict resolution followed by a recommendation of the Joint Council to the Delegate Gathering. This recommendation could entail removal as desired by the Regional Church, or it may be a recommendation for other ways to rebuild the relationship.
- Relational
 - o Ultimately the determination by a Regional Church that it wishes to withdraw from the partnership that is MC Canada represents a relational shift that can flow from many sources. The primary protection from splintering is the ongoing work at the Executive Staff Group, the Joint Council, and the Delegate Gathering to nurture the relationships. But that is only effective if there are deeper relational connections among individuals and Congregations across regional boundaries. As a covenanted community at all of its levels (Congregation, Regional Church, Nationwide Church, global communion) relational work is always the primary bulwark against division.
 - o This means that for all leadership positions within the Regional Churches and the Nationwide Church, a commitment to maintaining the relationships is a key selection criterion.

Is there an enforceable commitment to unity?

In some ways, this question flows from the concern for accountability across the Church. It also steps into a deeper question. In part, it speaks to what it means to be church together. We desire unity for the church. Yet we have multiple perspectives on much of what it means to be together, on the core aspects of our theology, on what music is best for worship, and myriad other topics. Some of these differences are historical, some are rooted in theology, some are rooted in personality, some are rooted in the fact that we are Canadian and that creates regional differences. What does it mean to be united in the midst of our differences?

Gilbert Rendle addresses what it means to be together among our differences in his book, *Behavioral Covenants in Congregations: A Handbook for Honoring Differences*. First note the subtitle: from his perspective, the goal is not erasing differences but being together with our differences. His suggestion, and the suggestion of others, is that the church is a place where we are meant to be different. These differences are a strength rather than a weakness.

Rendle draws a distinction between what he calls the domain of law and the domain of free choice. In the domain of law, we are constrained, with sanctions available when we breach those constraints. In the domain of free choice, we have just that, the ability to choose without external constraints.

Rendle suggests that the church operates in neither the domain of law nor the domain of free choice. He says that there is a space between: The domain of holy manners and obedience to the unenforceable. We agree to live together in certain ways. We agree to hold together in our differences. We agree that we seek unity in those differences. But in the end unity cannot be enforced. As soon as we seek to enforce unity, we fall into the domain of law. On the other hand, those commitments to unity are not simply free choice. If an individual seeks to withdraw from a Congregation, a Congregation seeks to leave a Regional Church, a Regional Church seeks to leave the partnership that is MC Canada, MC Canada seeks to leave MWC, the response is not a simple goodbye. The expression of the desire to leave necessitates a conversation. A conversation that calls everyone to make accommodations to maintain "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" as we read in Ephesians.

All of which is to say that there is no enforceable commitment to unity. What there is will be a provision similar to the current bylaw for removing a Regional Church from membership. A member can only be removed after the use of a conflict resolution process followed by recommendation by the Joint Council to the Delegate Gathering.

The method the Regional Churches use to select their delegates

In general, Regional Churches will establish their own process for selecting delegates to the Delegate Gathering and their appointment to the Joint Council. That being said, the operating agreement among the Regional Churches will have provisions setting out the skill sets needed for these appointments. In addition, there will be commitments in the operating agreement to diversity in these appointments.

The need for careful delineation of the roles of each level of the church

The various levels of the church do play different roles:

- Congregations as centres of mission, worship, and ministry
- Regional churches as supporters of Congregations and as centres of larger opportunities for mission, worship, and ministry
- MC Canada as the voice for the whole, as the holder of our nationwide identity, as a centre for larger opportunities for mission, worship, and ministry, and as a place for gathering as a nationwide community.

Beyond this, carefully delineating roles risks falling into a strict separation of powers among these levels of the church. This proposal opts for the fluidity that comes with the Regional Churches discerning together the priorities for MC Canada. It opts for a fluidity that allows for creativity to arise in various places in the Church.

Appendix 2

Frequently Asked Questions

Will Mennonite Church Canada still exist?

Yes. MC Canada will exist as a creation of the Regional Churches to carry out the priorities that they establish. This includes some program responsibility, being the voice of the church to ecumenical bodies and to MWC, holding our commitment to be a nationwide people of God, and various support services to Regional Churches and Congregations.

What will be the same?

The following will be maintained:

- Congregations will continue to be resourced with services from the CommonWord Bookstore and Resource Centre (operated jointly by MC Canada and Canadian Mennonite University),
- the administration of pension and benefits plans for participating member Congregations,
- some coordination and facilitation, together with Regional Churches, of International and Canadian Witness programs,
- communication to Congregations, and
- an archival function for important historical records of congregational documents.

What will be different?

In broad strokes, nationwide priorities and ministry will be drawn into a closer relationship with Congregations through the efforts of Regional Churches. The Joint Council will receive, review, and recommend action for International Witness opportunities. Nationwide priorities will receive attention, discussion, and recommendations at Regional Church annual gatherings. Congregations will combine the funding amounts they currently give to Regional Churches and MC Canada into one total amount to be forwarded to their Regional Church. The Regional Church will forward a negotiated funding amount to MC Canada for its work.

Will we still gather as a national church family?

It is envisioned that we will continue to gather as a nationwide family to discern matters of faithfulness, worship, and learn together. It is expected that the meetings of the Delegate Gathering will be connected with these other events.

How will MC Canada be funded?

The proposed financial plan is reliant entirely on congregational funding to Regional Churches. Regional Churches in turn will forward a negotiated amount to MC Canada. Individual and designated donations continue to be welcome, but will not be planned for as a matter of fiscal responsibility.

What will the new governance structure look like?

The Nationwide Church is governed directly by the Regional Churches through a Joint Council made up of 2 members from each Regional Church and 3 officers elected by the Delegate Gathering of MC Canada. Nationwide priorities will be debated and discerned at Regional Church annual meetings.

What will happen to Witness International Ministries in this new model?

Some existing international Witness work will be largely wound down by June, 2018, partly due to natural attrition. New requests for International Witness will be received and reviewed at the MC Canada level and tested with the Joint Council/Regional Church Leaders, who may approve and test further for appetite and funding support among Congregations. Congregations that are currently supporting international ministry projects or workers will be invited to continue pursuant to the need for that work.

What will happen to Indigenous Relations?

The answer to this question is not fully answered yet. There is a commitment to adequate staff for this role at MC Canada. There is ongoing discussion about Indigenous Settler Relations staff at the Regional Churches.

What will Leadership Development look like?

The Regional Churches will play a stronger role in Leadership development than they have in the past. The MC Canada Executive Minister will have a coordinating role.

How will Congregations continue to be resourced with books, music, Sunday School, and other teaching materials?

The CommonWord Bookstore and Resource Centre continues to serve pastors, teachers, lay leaders, and Congregations through a partnership with Canadian Mennonite University. MC Canada's relationship with MennoMedia as the joint publisher, together with MC USA, continues.

What about pastor and congregational staff pension and benefits administration?

MC Canada office staff will continue to serve participating pastors and congregational staff with pension and benefits administration.

How will we relate to partner and affiliated organizations such as MennoMedia and Mennonite Mission Network?

It is expected that many of these relationships will continue unchanged. Conversations among leaders about these relationships are not yet completed.

Why is the Executive Office expense amount so large?

This item includes our Fair Share pledge to Mennonite World Conference, attends to the costs of maintaining our ecumenical relationships, and costs associated with the Joint Council.

How will communication about nationwide priorities reach Congregations?

While there is still work being done on the communication strategy, Congregations can expect to hear from their Regional Churches as nationwide priorities are being developed. They can also expect that MC Canada will continue to communicate about the programs and ministries that it manages.

How will national advocacy happen in the new system on matters such as physician assisted dying, war and weapons escalation, etc.? Who will be our voice to governments?

The Executive Minister of MC Canada is to be the representative voice to others: ecumenically, as well as to partners and government. Regional Church gatherings will become a place for further engagement on shared topics of concern. The Community of Spiritual Leadership will attend to matters of shared concern and prepare for the Study Conferences where the topics can be discerned together as a nation-wide conversation. Discussions on these matters are ongoing.

What are Area Churches doing to equip themselves for new and additional responsibilities?

If the current level of congregational giving to Regional Churches and the Nationwide Church is maintained, some of that funding will be reallocated to Regional Churches to strengthen their capacity for new initiatives and opportunities.

How was the money sharing formula from Area Churches to MC Canada calculated?

For FYE 2019 the financial planning process went through numerous methods to work out the contribution amounts. The final calculation started with calculating the best estimates of the Regional Churches for expected congregational contributions. Each Regional Church started from its current budgeted expenses, with adjustments made for new responsibilities or for reduced responsibilities. When these projected responsibilities were met the remaining money on the income side became available to be transferred to MC Canada. Surprisingly, this calculation meant that each Regional Church was transferring to MC Canada almost the same amount per individual member of the Regional Church. It is not assumed that the same method will be used in the future, once there is data from FYE 2019. If current level of congregational giving to Regional Church and Nationwide Church is maintained, some of that funding will be reallocated to Regional Churches to strengthen their capacity for new initiatives and opportunities.



Interim Council

Mennonite Church Canada
Mennonite Church British Columbia
Mennonite Church Alberta

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan
Mennonite Church Manitoba
Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

Our Vision

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.

Statement Of Identity And Purpose

God calls, equips and sends the church to engage the world with the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We are a community of disciples of Jesus,
a part of the Body of Christ,
covenanted together
as congregations,
area churches, and
a national church body.

Gratefully responding to God's initiatives and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves and our resources to calling, equipping and sending the church to engage the world with the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ.