



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: Discernment Guide Special Assembly 2017

Supplement

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Using Robert's Rules of Order in the Church

The culture of MC Canada generally values flexible and responsive discernment processes, especially in congregations. In many cases this preference includes the use of consensus for addressing difficult decisions. These processes enable the group to develop outcomes that respond to new ideas as they emerge in conversation. In such smaller contexts flexibility and responsiveness to emerging ideas works well in crafting decisions that capture the sense of the direction desired by the entire group.

Such processes become unwieldy and can become counter-productive in larger groups. What works well in a congregational meeting of 50 or 75 people where things can be set aside for a later conversation, does not generally work well in the larger denominational meetings where decisions need to be made in the current meeting, where the next opportunity for face to face conversation may be two years down the road.

It is for this reason that Robert's Rules of Order are used in these larger gatherings. Robert's Rules are often seen as outdated, complicated, and contrary to the ethos of the church. However, the purpose of this structured way of making decisions is to create a context where decisions are made transparently and fairly, within the time constraints imposed by the meeting schedule.

Gerald Mast, professor communication at Bluffton University has written some reflections in this dynamic following the MC USA gathering in Orlando earlier this year. This can be found at <https://themennonite.org/opinion/following-roberts-rules-culture-consensus-reflections-mennonite-process-displayed-orlando/> or by doing an internet search for "mast robert's rules orlando".

While many who attend denominational meetings are familiar with Robert's Rules, it cannot be assumed that everyone has experience with them.

How does a decision-making process under Robert's Rules work and how will they affect Special Assembly?

This is a description of the basics:

- 1) The Moderator guides the conversation and ensures that the process is transparent, fair, and productive.
- 2) A Parliamentarian who has expertise in Robert's Rules is present to advise the Moderator, and to make definitive decisions regarding the application of the Rules. The Parliamentarian helps ensure that the process remains transparent, fair, and productive.
- 3) There will be periods of conversation among the delegates in small groups that will be structured as those groups decide.
- 4) For discussion in the full delegate gathering there will be time for open discussion with questions and responses to a topic.
- 5) Formal decision making begins when a "motion" is placed "on the floor" by a delegate or the appropriate board or committee.
 - a) A motion is placed on the floor when someone "moves" the wording for a particular decision.
 - b) The motion becomes eligible to vote on once a "seconder" agrees to support the wording that was used by the person who "moved" the motion. If there is no "seconder" for the motion, the motion "dies" and is not acted on. Where the motion is brought by the General Board, there is no need for a seconder.
 - c) Once a motion has been "moved" and "seconded," it is now ready for open discussion from the floor.
- 6) Once a motion has been presented to the delegates for their consideration, the discussion of the motion will be governed by Robert's Rules.

- 7) What does that look like:
- a) A delegate may speak once they have been recognized by the Moderator.
 - b) Delegates will be asked to speak in response to the motion. In other words, given that the delegates will be voting on whether to approve the motion, the discussion needs to be focused only on the merits of the motion and the merits of the document that the motion is asking the delegates to approve. This is not a time to introduce other topics.
 - c) The exception is when someone raises a point of order, which questions whether Robert's Rules are being properly followed. Generally, this is referred to the Parliamentarian whose decision is final. Once this is dealt with the discussion returns to the motion.
 - d) Our practice has been that no delegate speaks to a particular motion more than once until all who wish to respond have been heard. Our practice has also been to time limit each contribution by a delegate.
 - e) After an appropriate length of discussion, the Moderator will ask the delegate body to vote on the motion.
 - f) A delegate can bring a motion to "call for the Question" from the floor at any time and request that the voting begin. This must however be done through the regular discussion process of coming to the microphone to speak and being recognized by the Moderator. If there is not obvious unanimous consent to proceed to the vote, this motion to "call for the Question" is subject to a 2/3 majority vote of the delegates.
 - g) Delegates also have the option to introduce a new motion that amends the motion under discussion on the floor. The same process that was used for the initial motion is repeated. A delegate "moves an amendment" and another delegate must "second" the amendment before it is open for discussion. Where the discussion is related to a motion to approve a document, a motion to amend the document can be introduced.
 - g.i) When an amendment is introduced, discussion on the initial motion stops. Discussion is now focused solely on the wording of the amendment.
 - g.ii) When the "question is called" by the Moderator or a delegate, a vote is taken to approve or reject the suggested amendment.
 - g.iii) After the amendment is "passed" or "turned down," discussion returns to the original motion and the document to which it refers, either the original, or as it has just been amended.
 - g.iv) This can get complex as amendments to the amendment can be introduced, leading to a cascading series of discussions and votes.
- h) When the time comes, the vote is held either when the Moderator calls for the vote, or there is a motion to call the question. To pass a motion to approve the bylaw changes requires a 2/3 majority. Approval of any other motion requires a simple majority of 50% plus one.
- i) In past assemblies there have been motions to table an item. Strictly speaking this is only done in order to take up more urgent business, after which discussion returns to the tabled item.
 - j) It is however open to delegates to agree to defer an item until a later time, for another body to take action, or to set it aside permanently.
- 8) There are also ways that our practice has developed over the years that are not strictly in compliance with Robert's Rules:
- a) We allow the mover and seconder to change the wording of a motion in order to strengthen the clarity of the motion, but not to change the substance of the motion.
 - b) Rather than amending a motion, we have delegated a small group of leaders to develop a new motion that better captures the sense of what the delegates would like to see happen.
 - c) We have agreed that applause by the delegates in response to a point made by a speaker is not appropriate for our context where we are seeking to value many points of view.

Canadian Mennonite University

Two primary questions have arisen as to the status of Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) if the changes proposed in the Discernment Guide are approved:

- If the changes are passed, is the transition to Prairie Regional Church governance a done deal?
- What is the decision process regarding the status of CMU as a nationwide or regional school?

There are several responses to these questions:

- 1) The Future Directions Task Force Final Report and Addendum addressed the question of the structural location of the institutions of higher education:

“Post-secondary institutions are a little more complex, both inherently and in terms of their historic place in our denomination. The proposed shift in structure would leave governance for Colombia Bible College and Conrad Grebel University College largely unchanged since their accountability is already largely regional in nature. However, for CMU the proposed shift raises a question of a change in governance relationship with Mennonite Church Canada which now is national. One possibility is that CMU governance could also become regional, with the congregations of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba taking responsibility for the Mennonite Church side of CMU governance.”
- 2) This suggestion in the Report is rooted in the basic model for the new church structure that is proposed by the Future Directions Task Force (FDTF) Final Report and Addendum.
- 3) During the transition work of the last year there has been an ongoing conversation among Executive Staff Group (ESG) and the school presidents regarding the future of higher education. One part of this conversation has been about moving forward with the suggestion in the FDTF Final Report and Addendum.
- 4) This remains an ongoing conversation, and no final decisions or concrete proposals have been made. While the summary of the higher education material in the Discernment Guide indicates that the Interim Council is proposing that CMU be transferred to ownership by the Prairie Regional Churches, there is considerable work to be done before a final proposal with details can be completed. One benefit of giving this discussion more time is that it would allow time for creativity in developing a governance model.
- 5) If the delegates approve the change proposals presented to Assembly delegates, the new Joint Council would continue the conversation to determine if such a change is viable and how the structure can be changed so as to enable CMU to continue to thrive in that change, and how such a change would affect CMU’s place within the nationwide priority of higher education.
- 6) There will come a point where a formal decision will need to be made about a shift in ownership. A shift to ownership by Prairie Regional Churches will require action by each of the following bodies:
 - a) The Boards and/or the Delegates of the Prairie Regional Churches will need to accept ownership.
 - b) MC Canada, MC BC and MCEC will each need to agree to the change
 - c) The CMU Board of Governors will need to approve the change in ownership

Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary

The Future Directions Task Force Final Report and Addendum in its section on higher education had this to say regarding AMBS:

“Questions also remain for how the integrated body might retain a role in the governance of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS).”

Conversations about the status of AMBS as a binational seminary commenced in 2016. The fact that this conversation began resulted in questions and concerns in the constituency about the loss of the relationship between MC Canada and AMBS. No action is being taken

or recommended at this time. This question requires more conversation and more time. As a result, it is anticipated that this discussion will be picked up by the Joint Council or General Board (depending on the outcome of the vote at Special Assembly). In the meantime, MC Canada will continue to play its current role in the governance of AMBS.

Currently, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC) forwards funding to AMBS through MC Canada. MCEC has indicated that AMBS continues to be in their budget planning. In the future, it will need to be determined whether those funds would continue to be forwarded through MC Canada or directly to AMBS.

Conrad Grebel University College and Columbia Bible College

Conrad Grebel is currently an MCEC school and there is no change in this relationship. Columbia is currently jointly owned by MCBC and the Mennonite Brethren Conference in BC. There is no change in this relationship.

Diversity Update: Special Assembly 2017

In October 2016 after the hiring of Keith Regehr as the Transition Coordinator and the MC Canada Fall Leadership Assembly, there was discussion in the online forum as well as elsewhere about the lack of diversity in the various leadership structures of both MC Canada and the Area Churches. This conversation continued in the 2017 Area Church Annual Delegate Sessions, both in public and private conversations.

Interim Council and Executive Staff Group recognize that this is an important question that calls for a response. They have continued to discuss this issue over the last year. In both groups there is a strong commitment to addressing the issue of diversity within the church's leadership bodies. There is also an understanding that simply creating a list of people who match the diversities on a list and filling those positions does not fully answer the question.

Part of the discussion was a recognition that responding to the need for diversity in our leadership groups is deeply complex and those in leadership who need to make decisions and build a plan for strengthening the diversity of leadership do not have the requisite skills or knowledge. As a result, Interim Council has retained Rebekah Steele, a consultant with the expertise we need.

Already in the process of hiring the consultant there have been several important lessons we have learned:

- Simply changing the faces in the leadership groups is inadequate. There needs to be a culture of inclusion. This means a shift that values the diversity of voices and is prepared to hear and take into account new perspectives.
- There are structural elements to the way the church functions that make it hard to broaden representation in its leadership bodies. One simple example—leadership meetings that call for volunteer member to travel across the country and meet on weekdays for multiple days make it hard for those with jobs that do not allow such freedom to attend. How many vacation days can a person with two weeks vacation take in order to attend such meetings?

- Diversity calls for significant work to shape an ecosystem in the church that makes it easy for people to say “Yes” to being in leadership.
- A structure in which many of those who participate in governance of the Nationwide Church are appointed by other bodies (whether congregations in the current structure or Regional Churches in the new structure) means that changes that facilitate diversity at MC Canada are dependant on other bodies. There will need to be change at the Regional Churches as well so that appointments to MC Canada bodies represent the diversity that is the church. This work belongs to all of us, from Congregations to Regional Churches to Nationwide Church.
- For change to happen, decisions to change need to be made in the current leadership groups that are not diverse.

What is next?

- ESG is working with the consultant to create a body that will do the work of establishing goals for diversity and inclusion, assessing the barriers to diversity and inclusion, and building the mechanisms to overcome the barriers and meet the goals.
- To that end ESG is currently developing a list of names (2 to 3 from each Area Church) to participate with ESG in doing this work. Recognizing even at this point the challenge of finding a diverse group of volunteers from across the country who would have the time to engage in the process, the consultant is reshaping her process to take into account these challenges.

Financial Plan Update

Revised Projections of Regional Church Income and Expenditures for Calculating Transfers to MC Canada

This chart corrects some items from the equivalent in the Discernment Guide

- For MCBC the expenses used to calculate the number in line 8 were incomplete.
- The MCBC payment to Columbia Bible College is now listed separately for consistency across all Regional Churches. In addition, This is now corrected.
- For clarity, Line 5, Income From Individuals, has been broken out from the other income in Line 6.
- Line 17 for MCEC has been changed to correct a calculation error.

1		MCBC	MCA	MCS	MCM	MCEC
2						
3	Income from Congregations	293,000	369,000	467,000	1,032,000	2,055,000
5	Income From Individuals	193,000	101,000	54,000	108,000	136,000
6	All Other Income	165,000	57,000	89,000	196,000	474,000
7	Total INC	651,000	527,000	610,000	1,336,000	2,665,000
8	2017 expenses from Annual Reports	425,000	232,000	359,000	570,000	1,337,000
9	Added for Executive Minister and communications		40,000			
10	Camps		94,000		126,000	37,000
11	AMBS					61,000
12	CMU/Grebel/CBC	125,000	25,000	50,000	100,000	154,000
13	Other					186,000
14	Indigenous ***	Included above				25,000
15	Church Engagement	50,000	20,000	67,000	90,000	90,000
	National Delegates	7,500	6,500	7,000	10,000	13,000
16	Total expenses	607,500	417,500	483,000	896,000	1,878,000
17	Net for MC Canada	43,500	109,500	127,000	440,000	787,000
18	Total to MC Canada	1,507,000				

*** Note that this plan is retaining the national role for Indigenous Settler Relations to full time. There are ongoing discussions about how this role supports Indigenous Settler Relations work at the Regional Church level. If the proposal is accepted, this will be taken up by Joint Council after the conclusion of Assembly.

MC Canada Expenditures and Income

This chart is updated to reflect the change on contribution from MCBC and to correct the addition error for MCEC. Line 17 has been adjusted upward to compensate for the reduction in the MCBC contribution. Even with the change the amount in Line 17 is a conservative estimate. Some of the expenses numbers have been adjusted to reflect change in expected costs.

	FYE 2019 Proposed	
1	International Witness Staff, program oversight, project funding	\$710,000
2	Executive Office Staff, travel, ecumenical participation, MWC, Joint Council	\$360,000
3	Anabaptist Resources Staff, program, CommonWord, Archives	\$238,000
4	Support Services Staff, pension/benefits admin, events, building, supplies, etc.	\$230,000
5	Communications Staff, program, Canadian Mennonite	\$212,000
6	Canadian Witness Staff, program	\$152,000
7	Leadership Dev. Ministerial Leadership Inventory database, other	\$20,000
8		1,922,000
9		
10	Transfers from Regional Churches and Other Income	
11	MCEC	\$787,000
12	MCM	\$440,000
13	MCSK	\$127,000
14	MCA	\$109,500
15	MCBC	\$43,500
16	Witness Designated	\$300,000
17	Self-Generated	\$115,000
18		1,922,000



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.