

1 **Proposal for processing at 2018 summer conventions**
2 **(December 11, 2017)**

3 **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING REGARDING**
4 **MENNONITE BRETHREN HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

5 **(The text below is identical to the one approved by delegates at both summer 2014**
6 **conventions, except for the new subsidy amounts marked in red on lines 81 and 82)**

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8 This Memorandum is entered into between the United States Conference of the Mennonite Brethren
9 Churches (“the U.S. Conference”) and the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches (“the Canadian
10 Conference”) in order to formalize their agreement regarding the ongoing operation of the Mennonite Brethren
11 Historical Commission.

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13 **INTRODUCTION**

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15 Since 1969, the Historical Commission of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches has
16 been charged with the collection and preservation of historical materials relating to the Mennonite Brethren churches
17 of the United States and Canada. It has served as a clearinghouse and coordinating agency between the various
18 Mennonite Brethren regional archival centers and has also overseen the Fresno center and its work of collecting
19 General Conference archival materials. The national conferences recognize the value of these responsibilities and
20 desire to continue the work of the Commission following divestiture of the General Conference ministries to the
21 national conferences.

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23 The national conferences acknowledge and affirm that the Mennonite Brethren of North America have a
24 rich history that must not be forgotten. The work of the Historical Commission has been critical to securing that
25 heritage for future generations. In addition, the Commission has been instrumental in preserving the history of the
26 greater Mennonite Brethren community, from local congregations to Mennonite Brethren conferences around the
27 world. The national conferences feel strongly that the discontinuance of a bi-national North American conference
28 must not jeopardize the preservation of the denomination’s historical foundations.

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30 The national conferences therefore agree to covenant together to continue the mandate and ministry of the
31 Historical Commission through a bi-national partnership.

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33 **LEGAL STATUS**

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35 The present work of the General Conference Historical commission will be continued by a bi-national
36 commission which will be known as the Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission. The Commission will not have
37 a separate legal existence. Instead, it will operate under the oversight of the US Conference and the Canadian
38 Conference, with its financial affairs managed by Fresno Pacific University (“FPU”) and the Canadian Conference.
39 Accounting and bookkeeping services will be provided by FPU.

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41 The Commission will report to the regularly scheduled conventions of the US and Canadian Conferences.
42 In addition, it will communicate as needed with the executive personnel and executive bodies of the US and
43 Canadian Conferences.

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45 **MEMBERSHIP AND STRUCTURE**

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47 The Commission will be composed of six members and should include, but not necessarily be limited to,
48 individuals with competence in historical research and archival work. Members shall be selected as follows:

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50 • 3 elected or appointed by the Canadian Conference;
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52 • 3 elected or appointed by the United States Conference;

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54 All commission members must be members in good standing of a church congregation that is a member of
55 one of the national conferences.

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Commission members will serve four-year terms. Any limit on the number of consecutive terms served by a member will be determined by the respective national conferences. Terms will be staggered in order to allow for continuity and balance of membership.

The Commission will organize itself by selecting a Chair, Associate Chair and Recording Secretary from among its elected and appointed members. The Chair and Associate Chair will come from different national conferences and the nationality of the persons filling these roles will normally alternate between the two conferences.

An Executive Secretary will be selected by the Historical Commission and be employed by a legal entity (e.g., a Mennonite Brethren school, Conference or congregation). The Historical Commission will reimburse the legal entity for the employee's salary and benefits, according to the funding arrangement made between the Historical Commission and the legal entity.

In addition, one representative from each of the regional archival centers (currently located in Hillsboro, Fresno, Winnipeg and Abbotsford) shall sit on the Commission as ex officio members.

Representatives of historical committees from other Mennonite Brethren national conferences may be invited to participate with the Commission as liaison members. In the future, consideration may be given to formally adding additional member conferences to the Commission and/or evolving the Commission into an ICOMB-based agency.

FUNDING

Each national conference shall provide the Commission with an annual grant (currently \$12,000 USD from the US Conference and \$13,000 CAD from the Canadian Conference). Periodic review of this amount will take place with the leadership boards of the national conferences. The Commission's budget and financial statement will be provided annually to the leadership boards of the US and Canadian Conferences.

Additional funding for the work of the Commission will continue to be provided by the Cloud of Witnesses Endowment, which is held by Mennonite Brethren Foundation; and by the Historical Commission Endowment, which is held by the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.

REVIEW

The agreements set forth in this memorandum of understanding and the relationships established herein will be reviewed by the national conferences at least every four years to determine whether any changes are desired.