

**Canadian Mennonite Encyclopedia Online Committee Minutes
Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford, B.C.
5-6 December 2002**

Present: Bert Friesen (chair), David Giesbrecht, Alf Redekopp, Richard Thiessen, Victor Wiebe, Abe Dueck, Peter Penner, Sam Steiner.

Regrets: Linda Huebert Hecht.

1. **Welcome** by David Giesbrecht, prayer by Bert Friesen.
2. **Review of minutes** of 24-25 May 2002. Minutes were approved.
3. **Review of agenda.**
4. **Appointment of secretary.** It was agreed that the committee would continue to rotate the position of secretary. The following have served as recording secretary in the past:

David Giesbrecht: 4 December 1998
David Giesbrecht: 3-4 December 1999
Alf Redekopp: 5-6 May 2000
Richard Thiessen: 29-30 November 2000
Victor Wiebe: 4-5 May 2001
Linda Huebert Hecht: 28-29 November 2001
Abe Dueck: 24-25 May 2002
Richard Thiessen: 5-6 December 2002

The proposed rotation is as follows:

Sam Steiner: 2003
David Giesbrecht: 2004
Alf Redekopp: 2005
Victor Wiebe: 2006
Linda Huebert Hecht: 2007
Abe Dueck: 2008
Peter Penner: 2009
Richard Thiessen: 2010

5.1 Progress in new content.

The Manitoba groups have edited biographical entries in batches. The two editorial sub-groups are Abe Dueck and Bert Friesen, and Ernie Braun and Lawrence Klippenstein. We have added 65 articles, mostly biographies, in 2002.

5.2 Editorial manager's report.

Sam distributed a report. The report included a statistics report.

There was discussion on whether or not we should maintain an archival copy of the encyclopedia. It was concluded that Sam would do this on an annual basis. This decision was made with the understanding that some articles might be changed more than once in a calendar year. Therefore, not all of the changes will be archived. An issue to keep in mind is the importance of keeping an archival copy of every version of an article in order to prove copyright infringement.

The committee discussions emphasized the importance of the provincial sub-groups in the editorial process, and the importance of making writers aware of the templates, either electronically by visiting the web site, enclosing the template as an email, or printing them off and enclosing them in a letter.

At this point in time there does not seem to be a need for more editorial teams. We anticipate that Ted Regehr will be submitting 50 biographies and 30 congregational articles covering the North West Conference.

It was pointed out that we should update the bibliography section of the biography template to emphasize that we do not want a list of works cited or referenced but a research bibliography.

In terms of our pool of writers, there have been a few cases where children have been asked to write articles about their parents, with mixed results. The key is objectivity, and this will be achieved if people follow the template.

5.3 “Who are the Mennonites” section.

Not much work has been done on this section. Can we get a grant to rework this section? The article could summarize different views of who Mennonite are (a historiographical perspective). We currently have an interpretive article. It was suggested that we might want to consider the need for a factual article, such as an updated digital version of “One Quilt, Many Pieces.”

5.4 Congregation Section.

We are now at the point where we can begin to focus on updating congregational entries and creating new ones. Canadian Archival Information Network (CAIN) descriptions exist for Mennonite Church congregations in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Ontario that have holdings at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, and for Mennonite Brethren congregations throughout Canada with holdings at the Centre for M.B. Studies. Sam has used data from these descriptions to update some congregational entries.

A proposed congregational entry template, using Yarrow M.B. Church as an example, was distributed. It was agreed that the email address should be excluded to avoid

spamming. Life dates for pastors would help to clarify their identity. The Yarrow article will have three levels: the text, the tables, and the bibliography.

Sub-groups to deal with congregational records will be set up in each province. Information for the articles can be taken from the two archival centre web sites. We should be careful to give proper credit to those authors who wrote the CAIN entries.

5.5 Other web site issues.

In terms of the table of assignments, it is proposed that a status column be added and then completed articles be marked as completed and kept on the list. The status column would be a progress report column, identifying if the assignment has been accepted, if the article has been submitted, etc. It was decided that completed articles be removed from the table at each annual meeting. It was also agreed that any revisions to the tables should be submitted to Abe and Bert.

There was a discussion about the use of audio and visual files on the site. There are many sources for this type of data that are available.

6. Report from provincial groups.

6.1 Educational institutions: Manitoba has made a chart for the web site. Other provinces should check the table and make revisions and/or follow-up with assignments. It would be good to have an overall article on educational institutions that includes inter-denominational and other denominational schools where Mennonite students have attended.

6.2 Biographies: BC is starting on a second round of article assignments. Saskatchewan has received some articles but they might end up on the provincial site. The Manitoba group has compiled a list of around 60 biographies. Ontario will be reviewing the first list and putting together a second list. In Alberta Peter Penner reported that Irene Klassen is writing a book of Alberta biographies and needs to be asked if she is willing to submit articles for CMEQ.

6.3 Congregations: Each province will form a second sub-group to focus on denominational histories. Each province can determine the composition of the sub-group. Should we have direct communication with the churches? If so, [it was agreed to] limit it to your province to avoid duplication.

7. Technical matters.

Sam will contact PeaceWorks to enquire about xml developments. We are now using cascading style sheets.

8. Fund raising.

Do we maintain the present rate of progress or do we fast track the process? If so, we will require funding. There appears to be support in the society for this project, so why don't we ask the society to help raise funds? Would it be possible to encourage the society to raise funds for both the CMEO and the Divergent Voices projects? Can the present model work indefinitely? Could funds come from the colleges and seminary? If we had a VS position, what type of person would we need? We need a rationale for increasing the funding.

The committee asked many questions but came up with few answers. We have questions about the financial sustainability of the project that increasingly appears to need some sort of staff position.

We should have a news release once or twice a year to keep the project in the eyes of our constituencies.

9.1 Financial handout.

During 2002 the committee spent \$4,390.61. We agreed to request \$5,000 a year from the society for the next three years.

9.2 Grant applications.

Sam will apply for a CareerStart grant on behalf of CMEO to employ a student to work on congregational entry updates using CAIN descriptions. Provincial societies are also free to apply for student employment grants from the government. If CMEO does not receive a grant but provincial societies do, then CMEO will consider grants to the provincial society/societies.

10. Structure of committee.

This committee is a continuing committee, so we will ask the board to approve all current members. The position of secretary will rotate per proposed schedule. The position of chair will be appointed annually at the end of each annual meeting.

11. Date of next meeting.

We will meet once this year, beginning on Thursday evening, 4 December and concluding at the end of Friday afternoon, 5 December.

Recorded by Richard Thiessen