

GAMEO Management Board

Conrad Grebel University College

140 Westmount Road North

Waterloo, Ontario

2015 January 13-14 – 7:40 pm

Minutes

Present: Jon Isaak (Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission), Bert Friesen (Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, chair), John D. Roth (Mennonite World Conference; Institute for the Study of Global Anabaptism), Ray Brubacher (for Ken Sensenig (Mennonite Central Committee)), Colleen McFarland (Mennonite Church USA), Richard Thiessen (Managing Editor), Sam Steiner (Associate Managing Editor, recording secretary).

Guest: Jake Buhler (Saskatchewan Mennonite Historical Society)

1) Opening and introductions

Bert Friesen welcomed us to the meeting, especially Ray Brubacher who is representing Mennonite Central Committee in place of Ken Sensenig. Ken is traveling outside of North America.

For an opening Bert Friesen read from 2 Samuel 7. He closed with prayer.

2) Agenda Review

We accepted the agenda as circulated.

3) Minutes of November 8-9, 2013

Sam Steiner reviewed the minutes of November 8-9, 2013

CONSENSUS 1: To accept the minutes of November 8-9, 2013 as circulated.

4) Business arising from the minutes

Business arising items are included in the agenda.

5) Managing Editors Report

Richard Thiessen reviewed his report, which circulated earlier.

He said the number of GAMEO articles in December 2014 should be 15,644. GAMEO's number of visitors dropped when it changed to Mediawiki, but we have recovered some of this traffic. Richard reviewed various statistics available through Google Analytics.

Some 277 articles were added to GAMEO in 2014, though statistics for January 2014 are not available. All but a hundred of these were congregational "stubs" entered by the managing editor for conservative Mennonite congregations. Six French-language articles were written by Zacharie Leclair of Quebec; several Indiana congregational articles came from Nathan

Geiser, as part of an internship at the Mennonite Church USA Archives in Goshen. The pace of article submission from most regional editorial committees has slowed to a trickle.

The joint portal with the Global Anabaptist Wiki has launched this year; a link to the portal can be found at the bottom of GAMEO's "Welcome" page.

Richard Thiessen also reviewed the reports from the various regional editorial committees. The California committee suffered a loss when its chair, Corinna Siebert Ruth, died suddenly in July 2014. The Eastern Pennsylvania committee has decided to disband because of declining interest and lack of time. They recommend that GAMEO move to a more "wiki" approach. The British Columbia committee has begun to work on geographical article and an interdisciplinary article on Mennonites and Criminal Justice in British Columbia. Several provinces still do not have editorial committees. The Quebec report reflects good activity for a small group. The Lancaster committee has a new chair, and has restructured itself. They encourage creation of an updated version of the GAMEO DVD published in January 2011. Although Richard visited Kansas, he is not optimistic about a committee being established there. He also visited Saskatchewan and led a workshop.

In other activities, Richard said that the two managing editors worked through volume 1 and half of volume 2 evaluating articles for revision or updating. This work will continue. Jon Isaak has compiled a list of all theological articles in the print *Mennonite Encyclopedia*. In November we sent our remaining copies of the GAMEO DVD to Donald Martin of Green Pastures Press in Mifflin, Pennsylvania. We will have to determine if an update is warranted. Richard noted his available time for GAMEO this year was reduced by his change in employment to serve as executive director of the Mennonite Museum Society in Abbotsford, and oversight of the museum construction project there. He anticipates his schedule will moderate when the building project is complete.

Managing Editor tasks for 2015:

- 1. Press release after this meeting**
- 2. Mailing/billing to returning and potential sponsors**
- 3. Coordination of GAMEO display and four workshops at Mennonite World Conference assembly in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania**
- 4. Continued editorial work on GAMEO**

We spent time discussing the unsolicited article on Christology received from J. Denny Weaver. Jon Isaak has edited it for length, reducing it from 6600 to 4800 words. He believes it has potential, but also has limitations. Richard Thiessen wondered if it was adequately descriptive. Sam Steiner said it was narrowly focused on North America and the 20th century. John Roth suggested theological articles should be written in response to GAMEO guidelines, in terms of descriptive approach, historical scope and range of denominational/geographic perspectives.

CONSENSUS 2: To pick up discussion on the J. Denny Weaver article later, perhaps by email.

6) Adjournment until morning

We adjourned for the evening.

7) GAMEO Content Projects

a) *Hutterite Brethren*

Bert Friesen reported he has maintained contact with the Schmiedeleut, but has had no success this past year in getting them to update stubs. They are aware of the template available for their use.

b) *MennLex*

Richard Thiessen said he has not had official contact with MennLex in 2014, though there remains a clear understanding GAMEO can use articles posted on their site. Often their articles were originally written in English by North American authors; these could be requested from the authors. MennLex has 75-100 theological articles in the second phase of their project.

CONSENSUS 3: John Roth will ask Hans-Jürgen Goertz if MennLex utilized a template for their theological articles.

c) *Paraguayan Lexikon*

John Roth said Gundolf Niebuhr, Archivist for the Fernheim Colony, and a leader in the sponsoring society, is open to collaboration with GAMEO in encyclopedia work. The *Lexikon der Mennoniten in Paraguay* appears to be a fairly static site at this time.

CONSENSUS 4: John Roth will ask the Vereins für Geschichte und Kultur der Mennoniten in Paraguay if there is Spanish language content that might be available for use in GAMEO, and whether their content, in German or in translation, might be used in GAMEO with appropriate credit.

d) *Amish Online Encyclopedia*

CONSENSUS 5: The managing editors will check whether content in the Amish Online Encyclopedia (<http://amishamerica.com/amish-online-encyclopedia/>) might be a source of some information for GAMEO

e) *Anabaptist Dictionary of the Bible*

The project, under the Global Anabaptist Wiki, may be helpful in the revision/updating of some of GAMEO's theological articles. See [http://www.anabaptistwiki.org/mediawiki/index.php/Anabaptist Dictionary of the Bible](http://www.anabaptistwiki.org/mediawiki/index.php/Anabaptist_Dictionary_of_the_Bible).

8) GAMEO and the Global Anabaptist Wiki

Richard Thiessen said the common portal shows up for searches on "global Anabaptism."

John Roth said the stories formerly held on the Global Anabaptist Wiki are being moved to a

new website—“Bearing Witness Stories Project” (<http://www.martyrstories.org/>). The Global Anabaptist Wiki site will focus on sources and digital archives.

We will discuss possible inclusion of the Bearing Witness site in the common portal later in our meeting.

- 9) **Multilanguage Content** Richard Thiessen said the French articles are the only non-English articles at this time. There is an ongoing debate with Richard Lougheed, one of the Quebec editors, on Lougheed’s desire to link from French-language articles to English-language articles. He believes this would provide greater access to information for French readers. GAMEO has resisted this, because of the difficulty in managing links when more French-language articles are added.

Richard said we want to get the help pages and templates translated into French to make them more useful.

We briefly discussed whether our templates are appropriate for other language groups. We concluded they would be useful, but could be adapted for particular circumstances.

10) **GAMEO Structure Regional Groups**

Our discussion agreed we were not prepared to move in a more wiki-like direction in our structure.

CONSENSUS 6: Sam Steiner will respond to Forrest Moyer of the Eastern Pennsylvania committee on this matter.

Colleen McFarland observed the model of regional editorial groups in the U.S. is not working. She proposed greater outreach to Mennonite educational institutions by working with faculty members in Mennonite studies. Undergraduate writing projects would generate a peer-reviewed publication for them. John Roth noted there were about 90 student projects posted on the Global Anabaptist Wiki.

We had an extended discussion on whether funds would be better used to help faculty to redesign their courses to include GAMEO projects, or whether they should be used as honoraria for the student writers. We noted that few students currently take Mennonite studies courses.

Our discussion concluded it was not an either/or between regional editorial committees and working with college faculty. Where regional committees are effective, they can help to establish priorities in biographical, congregational and regional conference articles. GAMEO presently does not have funds allocated to support writing, either at the faculty or student level.

11) GAMEO Staffing

a) Managing Editor

Bert Friesen asked Richard Thiessen how he saw the Managing Editor position evolving over the next several years. This will become an increasing issue as GAMEO's structure becomes more diverse. Richard Thiessen said the present model is not sustainable over the long haul, and talked about his vision for a General Editor that would become the "face" of GAMEO, in participation by academics in writing larger articles, making international contacts, etc. The Managing Editors would continue to carry out the routine editorial tasks associated with submitted articles.

Richard Thiessen said some efforts at the global enterprise will be made at the MWC assembly workshops by inviting more people to become involved.

b) General Editor

John Roth said some major historical events will be celebrated in 2020 and 2025 (100th anniversary of Mennonite Central Committee; 500th anniversary of Anabaptism; 100th anniversary of Mennonite World Conference). Mennonite World Conference wants to take advantage of these dates to build the global Anabaptist/Mennonite historical identity, and to encourage younger churches in developing and preserving their historical consciousness. How can GAMEO help in this process?

We discussed the need to expand our financial support. Various options included asking MWC for staff funding (though GAMEO is likely a low priority), finding an academic "home" that would provide a bit of space and support, a donation button on the GAMEO website, or approaching foundations.

Our discussion narrowed to raising our partner and sponsor fees, approaching more institutions and historical societies in the United States, buying a small portion of the Managing Editor's time.

Several of these items surfaced again in the priorities discussion for 2015, and the budget setting for 2015. We did make two decisions at this point:

CONSENSUS 7: We will try to expand GAMEO's support by approaching more Mennonite historical societies in the U.S. Richard Thiessen will make the initial solicitation; Colleen McFarland will do a follow up contact selectively when she knows the society well.

CONSENSUS 8: Richard Thiessen will check with Mennonite World Conference about adding a donor button to the GAMEO website.

Richard will also talk at an appropriate time to his employer about the freeing some of his time for GAMEO-related work in exchange for a modest contribution from GAMEO.

12) Technical Issues

a) MediaWiki

Richard Thiessen said the MediaWiki platform is working well; Peaceworks Computer Consulting has provided good support when required.

b) Virtual Meetings

Bert Friesen said that as GAMEO becomes more global we will need to have virtual meetings.

Our discussion recognized the potential of these meetings, but they do not seem to be required at this time.

13) GAMEO Priorities for 2015

Richard Thiessen said the key was finding one or two individuals in a region to work at encouraging writing. Pakisa Tshimika, a former GAMEO management board member, is moving back to Congo; perhaps he can be helpful in identifying writers there. John Roth said the Global Educators Conference prior to the MWC assembly might be another place to build GAMEO awareness. GAMEO is trying to help preserve the stories of Anabaptists around the world.

CONSENSUS 9: The managing editors will continue to review the print volumes to identify articles requiring revision or updating.

We discussed the possibility of adding members to the management board—perhaps a person like Mark Jantzen (Bethel College, Kansas) who is also on the MennLex board, or Don Kraybill of the Young Center at Elizabethtown College. They could also serve in the “General Editor” role discussed earlier. Both could provide an institutional home. The Institute for Global Anabaptist Studies (Goshen) or a location in Winnipeg (CMU, Chair of Mennonite Studies?) would be other options. Perhaps the management board should remain North American, but a Content Advisory Board (Consulting Editors?) could be global in scope. A general editor could also be a recently retired academic.

CONSENSUS 10: Richard Thiessen will draft a “dream scenario” for GAMEO that would identify a general editor linked to an institution, and would include some budget and revenue projections. It would assume a continuing relationship with Mennonite World Conference. The draft scenario should be circulated to the management board by the end of April 2015.

14) Promotion

Richard Thiessen will prepare a news release that includes GAMEO’s vision as well as what has been completed.

15) **Financial Reports for 2014**

Richard Thiessen reviewed financial reports for 2013/14, including a statement of operations, a statement of financial position (\$5,736 in account on December 31, 2013) and statement of income and expenses. We discussed the need to increase our revenue.

CONSENSUS 11: To increase the annual contribution from partners and sponsors from \$250 to \$300.

We did not take formal action on the financial statements.

16) **Budget for 2015**

Richard Thiessen circulated a proposed budget for 2015. It includes a line for displays for the MWC booth.

CONSENSUS 12: To approve the budget for 2015 that includes the approved increases. This will result in income of \$6,900 against expenses of \$5,125, resulting in cash on hand at the end of 2015 of \$6,946.

17) **Other Business**

We discussed further whether there was a demand for a DVD version of GAMEO.

CONSENSUS 13: To explore archiving the GAMEO MediaWiki site, including the possibility of creating DVD copies.

18) **Next Meeting**

CONSENSUS 14: To schedule the next meeting of the Management Board for April 15-16, 2016 in Goshen, Indiana.

19) **Adjournment 3:10 pm**

Minutes recorded by Sam Steiner