

GAMEO Management Board

Hope Room, MCC Ontario Building

50 Kent Ave., Kitchener, ON

2018 May 11 – 7:00 pm

Present: Jon Isaak (Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission), Bert Friesen (Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, chair), John D. Roth (General Editor, Mennonite World Conference; Institute for the Study of Global Anabaptism), Ken Sensenig (Mennonite Central Committee), Jason Kauffman (Mennonite Church USA), Alf Redekopp (Associate Editor), Sam Steiner (Associate Editor).

1) Opening and introductions

Bert Friesen welcomed us to the meeting, especially Ken Sensenig who is representing MCC, and who has been represented by others from MCC in recent years. Alf Redekopp was welcomed as attending GAMEO Management Board for the first time. Jason Kaufmann was introduced as attending for the 2nd year.

Bert read a passage from I Kings 8: 54f (Solomon's blessing and prayer at the dedication of the new temple) and offered a prayer asking for the Lord's guidance as we continue to find ways to tell the stories of our ancestors to our household of faith and the world, both for today and for the next generation.

2) Review of Agenda

CONSENSUS 1: To accept the agenda as circulated.

3) Minutes of May 19-20, 2017

CONSENSUS 2: To accept the minutes of May 19-20, 2017 (Goshen) as circulated and reviewed.

4) Reports

a) General Editor

A written report had been received by all before this meeting. John Roth highlighted a few aspects from his first year in the role as GAMEO general editor. He reported that it was a year of trying to find his role. He acknowledged Sam as the go-to-person whenever he encountered something new. He reported that he had focussed his efforts on Kenya this year and pointed to some marginal success in getting a few new articles from Francis Ojwang. The written report listed priorities that he will continue to focus on in the next year.

b) Associate Editors

Sam Steiner reported that there are now over 16,400 articles in the encyclopedia. The

increase in articles is primarily due to his adding short “stub-like” articles for the Beachy Amish and related groups. Canada and the United States remain the top two countries from which site visitors come. The type of pages most frequently visited are similar to past years with some exceptions. For example, Humboldt Bible Church (Humboldt, Saskatchewan) was in position 7, presumably due to the general public’s interest in Humboldt following the fatal bus accident that killed 13 members of a hockey team from this town. Sam reported about the activity of Samuel Hoover, a conservative Mennonite in Pennsylvania who distributes GAMEO and other resources to groups that use computers but not the internet. Sam also confirmed that PeaceWorks Technology Solutions did the software upgrade in July 2017.

Alf Redekopp reported that he had been asked to take on the task of finalizing and uploading articles that came from the western provinces. The task had been quite manageable. He also acknowledged that Sam had been his go-to-person. The report also highlighted the complementary work he does with the Mennonite Archival Image Database (MAID), the major photo database of Mennonite archives.

c) Regional Editorial Committees

Sam reported that only British Columbia and Ontario have active committees. The creation of regional groups in other areas has not been successful. Nevertheless, individuals do submit articles and updates from time to time from various regions.

CONSENSUS 3: Agreed that Jason Kauffman will raise awareness of GAMEO with the Michiana Anabaptist historian group.

Instead of formal committees, a more successful approach may be to find interested individuals willing to work on GAMEO.

d) Brief Congregational Stubs

Sam reported that this template can be found on the English help page.

5) Staffing

CONSENSUS 4: That Jason Kauffman continue as an editor for another year with the intent to becoming an associate editor.

CONSENSUS 5: That John Roth continue as General Editor, and Sam Steiner and Alf Redekopp continue as Associate Editors.

CONSENSUS 6: That John Roth invite John Rempel (Ontario) to be added as a consulting editor.

CONSENSUS 7: That John Roth contact all the consulting editors informing them that they are listed as such on the site.

The functions of the former managing editor seem to be covered by the current roles and assignments.

Discussion followed about the gender imbalance particularly noticeable in the photo of the Management Board posted on the GAMEO website.

CONSENSUS 8: That we continue to strive for gender balance and that we agree that an effort should be made to invite local participants from the hosting area to attend Management Board meetings. These could include archivists, historians, consulting editors, writers, etc.

6) GAMEO and global content and multi-language content

CONSENSUS 9: That we reaffirm that we are a North American English-based resource.

7) Structure

a) Regional editorial groups

The promotion and creation of regional groups was already covered in the reports.

b) Global South Articles

We discussed updating the GAMEO country articles. MCC country reps might be in a good position to do this. They could be invited to consider updating them but would not be required or expected to do it. We acknowledged that asking to do such an assignment if time permits, often results in the work not being done. We also discussed updating the MCC related articles in GAMEO. We thought retired MCC staff administrators might be in a good position to update such articles. Names mentioned included Ron Mathies, Don Peters and others.

CONSENSUS 10: That Ken Sensenig continue to raise awareness within MCC with a goal to ensure there are current articles on MCC-related programs posted in GAMEO by MCC's 100th anniversary in 2020.

CONSENSUS 11: That John Roth continue to foster relationships with Mennonite education institutions and faculties in places such as India and Ethiopia and other places.

c) Gender balance in GAMEO management board, editors and content

Jason Kauffman reported on some of his initiatives working on articles and writers. We will continue to think about how we might work at this issue.

CONSENSUS 12: That we find a way at our annual meeting to invite others from the hosting area to attend a part of our meeting to talk about what we can do better.

8) Technical Issues – Dedicated Server

Bert Friesen reported that he had been invited to the PeaceWorks office to discuss GAMEO's technical needs. He learned that GAMEO's database size and level of web traffic is creating difficulties – not so much for GAMEO as for other PeaceWorks clients, as GAMEO demands more and more resources. PeaceWorks is recommending that GAMEO be moved to a dedicated server.

Bert read parts of a quote from PeaceWorks which would see our cost rise to \$5300/year (almost 5 times our current annual cost).

CONSENSUS 13: That we wait for another year to make a decision, first of all, because we do not have the finances to do it this year, secondly, there is unclarity as to why this is an issue at this time, when our user statistics have remained fairly constant over the recent years, and thirdly, there is also unclarity if there might be a saving by having a shared “dedicated” server with MAID (the Mennonite archival image database).

Consensus 14: That Bert Friesen seek clarity from PeaceWorks on the possibility of sharing a server with MAID.

CONSENSUS 15: That John Roth get another opinion on hosting costs from IT people he has access to in Goshen and that Ken Sensenig learn who hosts the MCC websites.

We agreed to reconvene Saturday morning at 9:00 a.m.

9) Adjournment at 9:10 pm

We reconvened at 9:00 am in the Hope Room at the MCC Ontario building.

10) Priorities for 2018

John Roth asked if the priorities listed in his report were the right priorities.

a) Develop contacts with global partners

John Roth said this year he would focus on Costa Rica, but not lose sight of Kenya. This approach parallels Mennonite World Conference's Renewal 2027 events that meet annually in different countries.

b) Discussion Board

John Roth said this idea came from Janneken Smucker, a history professor at West Chester University where she specializes in digital history, public history, and American material culture (including Amish quilts). She pointed out that GAMEO would be more vibrant if it could find ways to better engage its visitors.

Our discussion agreed that GAMEO's site security structure makes adding a comment feature to articles difficult. We then discussed other means by which to engage site visitors.

CONSENSUS 16: To make greater use of GAMEO's Facebook page and the Anabaptist Historians blog site (<https://anabaptisthistorians.org/>) to solicit contributions to GAMEO.

We also discussed finding a way to include a link that would allow email response to each GAMEO article, rather than making people find our email address on our landing page. The GRANDMA Online genealogy website utilizes such an approach.

CONSENSUS 17: Sam Steiner will explore ways to rework the footer section of articles to include an email link for feedback or corrections.

c) Classics of the Radical Reformation (CRR) links

John Roth said most of the CRR texts are now available digitally, could we make an effort to create links to these texts (and other digitally available sources) from our articles?

d) Theological articles that need updating

CONSENSUS 18: Jon Isaak will resurrect the list of theological articles that should be updated that he created earlier. He will compare it to the list of theological articles posted on MennLex V. Jon Isaak and John Roth will communicate about MennLex articles that could be used in GAMEO, either through translation of the MennLex article, or through approaching the original author if he/she drafted the article in English.

CONSENSUS 19: The updated theological articles should include the themes included in the "Shared Convictions of Global Anabaptists" prepared by Mennonite World Conference.

e) Volunteers for Specific Content Projects

We discussed what we might individually commit to do in the next year to increase GAMEO's content.

- i) Jon Isaak will pick up the review of theological articles noted above; he will also provide a GAMEO article on Katie Funk Wiebe; and he will review the status of articles on Mennonite post-secondary schools.**
- ii) Bert Friesen will continue to work on Hutterite content, hoping to get some biographical entries as well.**
- iii) Sam Steiner will continue to add conservative Mennonite congregations listed in the *Mennonite Church Directory* and perhaps some conservative Mennonite leadership biographies derived from the *Historical Journal of the Eastern Pennsylvania Mennonite Church*.**
- iv) Alf Redekopp will work on hot links from articles to the Classics of the Radical Reformation and other important sources/monographs available on archives.org.**
- v) Ken Sensenig will work on getting writers for the MCC-related articles, as well as some articles on Old Order and Conservative Mennonite groups in the eastern U.S.**

(in consultation with Steve Ness of the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society as needed).

- vi) Jason Kauffman will write some articles related to archival collections he has worked on (e.g. Paul Kraybill and Willis Horst), will work with Anita Hooley Yoder on important women leaders who should be included, will try to encourage historically-minded persons in Ohio, Indiana and Michigan who use the MC USA Archives to write for GAMEO, and will try to find some writers of stubs for Mennonite secondary schools.
- vii) John Roth will continue to pay attention to updating country articles through his Mennonite World Conference contacts, along with Ken Sensenig through his MCC contacts.

Alf Redekopp wondered if we could make greater use of the Global Mennonite History series in identifying names and creating biographies.

11) Promotion

a) News release

CONSENSUS 20: John Roth will prepare a 200-word release; he will circulate it to management board members for comment.

It could circulate to the Mennonite World Conference list of publications.

b) Other

Consensus 21: Jason Kauffman will contact Joel Nofziger about publicizing GAMEO and inviting potential writers on the Anabaptist Historians blog site and Facebook page.

We could also make greater use of GAMEO's Facebook page.

12) Finances

a) Financial Report for FYE 2017 (Appendix 1)

The report, prepared by Mennonite World Conference, indicated we had income of \$6,412 (Cdn)/\$5,081 (USA) and expenses of \$4,660 (Cdn)/\$3,559 (US) leaving a balance at the end of the year of \$6,655 (Cdn)/\$5,296.

CONSENSUS 22: To approve the financial statements for FYE December 31, 2017.

b) Fundraising for 2018

Bert Friesen said he would send out invoices the end of August or early September. He hopes to raise \$5,000-\$7,000. He asked whether requested amounts should be raised.

CONSENSUS 23: To keep request amounts from institutional supporters at the current level.

c) PeaceWorks quote for dedicated server (Appendix 2)

CONSENSUS 24: That Bert Friesen circulate the quote from PeaceWorks Technology Solutions to board members.

d) Individual donors

Ken Sensenig said we should take the opportunity for board members to provide names of persons who might donate to GAMEO. John Roth pointed out that some board members need to fundraise for their own agency, creating a difficult conflict.

We did note that many non-profit organizations expect board members to donate to the organization.

CONSENSUS 25: That Sam Steiner change the donation link on the landing page to connect directly both to the Canadian and U.S. credit card forms on the Mennonite World Conference site, with clearer instructions on how the donation should be made.

We suggested the Mennonite Historical Society (Goshen), the Muddy Creek Library (Amos Hoover) and the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society be added to the donor requests. Other historical societies who add articles to GAMEO could also be solicited.

CONSENSUS 26: That Bert Friesen test the supporting institutions letter with the board before sending it out.

e) Budget for 2018

Bert Friesen reviewed a draft budget that would see income of \$7,000 and expenses of \$4,000 in 2018. Our discussion suggested the lines for travel costs should be reduced since there is limited travel this year, and that the computer services and web hosting lines may need to be increased.

CONSENSUS 27: To approve the revised budget for 2018 in principle, with the printed revised budget be circulated to the Management Board (Appendix 3).

13) Next meeting

CONSENSUS 28: That the Management Board next meet in Goshen/Elkhart on May 17-18, 2019.

We will plan for three sessions: Friday afternoon business (3:00 pm-5:00 pm); Friday evening public session with local folks (7:00 pm-8:30 pm) and Saturday morning business (9:00 am-noon)

14) Adjournment at 11:50 am