

GAMEO Management Board

Zoom Meeting

2020 June 22 – 10:30 am

Present: Jon Isaak (Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission), Bert Friesen (Chair, Mennonite Historical Society of Canada), 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 Zoom meeting. We had hoped to meet in Akron, Pennsylvania, helping to celebrate MCC's 100th anniversary, but COVID-19 intervened. Bert read from Psalm 33 and closed with prayer.

2) Review of Agenda

CONSENSUS 1: To accept the agenda as circulated.

3) Minutes of May 6-7, 2019

Alf Redekopp reviewed the minutes from May 6-7, 2019.

Moved/Seconded/Carried (Alf Redekopp/Jon Isaak): To accept the minutes of May 6-7, 2019 (Goshen) as circulated and reviewed.

4) Reports circulated prior to meeting

a) Chair (Bert Friesen)

There was no discussion.

b) General Editor (John Roth)

There was no discussion.

c) Associate Editor & Statistical (Sam Steiner)

There was no discussion.

5) Technical Issues

a) Dedicated Server

Bert Friesen said because of the COVID-19 pandemic, PeaceWorks Technology Solutions was not able to hold to the earlier schedule for implementing the dedicated server we approved last year. The revised schedule calls for implementation by the end of July. The cost estimates have not changed.

PeaceWorks did mention the option of sharing the server with the Mennonite Archival Information Database (MAID), another inter-Mennonite project. However, the MAID folks believe it will eventually need its own dedicated server. So we will bear the full cost of this dedicated server. If our revenues continue as at present, this should be manageable.

Discussion:

- Does the dedicated server mean we have enormous room for growth? Response: We can grow as needed with the dedicated server.
- How much are server costs increasing? Response: It's about three times the cost of the current server which is shared. The increased cost is for the dedicated server.
- It will be time to update the MediaWiki software in another year for security reasons. (GAMEO presently uses version 1.33; version 1.35 is coming in August 2020.)

Bert Friesen reported that GAMEO usage by conservative Hutterite groups is increasing. Some conservative groups now have a computer on site, with limited access to public domains. GAMEO is among the approved websites.

6) GAMEO Priorities for 2020

a) General editor

John Roth said our vision is sometimes greater than what we are able to accomplish during the year. He worked hard to generate profiles from Costa Rica, but without success. There was limited success with *MennLex V*. There has been a flurry of congregational articles from Paraguay, with another 40-50 that could be done. He is working on two Indonesia projects that could lead to articles. Jon Isaak and Alf Redekopp did good work on two *MennLex* articles. We tried a workshop approach with an international group but translating the concept to getting finished articles is a real hurdle.

Discussion:

- There are differences between people groups. Our Western approach of codifying information may be imposing a way of doing things that doesn't naturally fit. Response: There are differences in cultures of memory. The Paraguay approach may be the way forward. The Mennonite Brethren conference in Paraguay asked pastors to fill out an information form that was transformed into a book about MB congregations. That book was written in Spanish; we are translating the articles into English GAMEO articles with their enthusiastic support. We are not asking them to create the article. This will likely be the case for Indonesia as well.
- Some recent Kansas-based biographies have been the result of transforming obituaries provided by John Thiesen at the Mennonite Library and Archives into GAMEO articles. We may need more people willing to do the writing of articles based on source material provided by others.
- Is this an acceptable approach? Response: The Paraguayan folks were pleased; they have respect for GAMEO

- Would they like the article also in their language? Response: Probably, but we do not have the resources to translate articles back into the original language. It has been working well to use ISGA staff for the Spanish to English translation.
- Do we need a budget line for this? Response: Not for the Paraguay project. If another data set becomes available, we might look at the question.
- Translating Mennonite Central Committee “country” material into GAMEO articles is also a hurdle, because the information is focused on MCC’s own work. Also resources are more limited in the current pandemic. Response: Some recently retired MCC administrators would be able to write GAMEO articles.

b) Regional Committees

Sam Steiner said the Ontario and British Columbia committees remain active. The Lancaster committee exists and has produced a few articles. It does not seem fruitful to work on regional committees more at this time.

c) General Editor and ISGA link

Several persons affirmed the way the relationship is currently working. John Roth noted there is a tenuous quality to our work with persons on the management board facing retirement or stepping back from the board. We need to talk about a succession plan.

d) Links to Primary Sources

John Roth said the Global Anabaptist Wiki has continued to work on the Biblioteca Digital Anabautista, a Spanish-language collection of sources to support distance learning. The Global Anabaptist Wiki hopes also to add French and Portuguese sources. Primary sources have shifted away from GAMEO.

e) Theological articles

Jon Isaak said he had worked with Helmut Harder on an article prepared for *MennLex* last year; he has not gone further.

CONSENSUS 2: Jon Isaak and Alf Redekopp will work on preparing one or more theological articles from *MennLex* for GAMEO in the next year. Priority will be given to articles related to Mennonite World Conference’s “Shared Convictions.”

7) Promotion

a) News release

CONSENSUS 3: John Roth will prepare a news release based on our meeting.

We took a screen shot of our Zoom group for the record but will not use it in a release.

b) Anabaptist Historians Blog

Jason Kauffman said he not written on this blog lately; when he does, he makes links to GAMEO. He has also done some promotion within the Michiana Anabaptist Historians group. Tapping people for specific articles seems to work best.

8) Finances

a) Financial Report for FYE 2019

Bert Friesen said the financial statements were delayed because of COVID-19. Finances

are in good shape and income seems to be stable. Invoices next year will also be sent to the more conservative post-secondary schools listed by Ken Sensenig. There was a balance at end-of-year of \$13,638 (U.S)/\$17,676 (Cdn)

Jon Isaak said invoices were also sent to high schools, but with no success. He sends invoices by postal mail; he does not know how the invoices are paid, i.e. check or electronically.

CONSENSUS 4: Jon will ask Len Rempel of Mennonite World Conference how payment is being made by donors.

CONSENSUS 5: To approve the Statement of Income and Expenses for MWC's GAMEO Fund for year ending December 31, 2019.

Bert Friesen said fundraising will follow the same process of previous years.

b) Budget for 2020

Bert Friesen reviewed the budget for 2020 that called for income of \$8000 and expenses of \$7650. We may need to keep in mind a line for content generation in future budgets.

CONSENSUS 6: To approve the budget for 2020.

9) Board Reorganization

Bert Friesen reminded the Management Board that he is giving up both his position as chair of the Management Board (after 33 years, beginning with the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada's database committee's formation in 1987) and as the board representative from MHSC. Bert understands from Jon Isaak of MHSC's nominating committee that Laureen Harder-Gissing, Archivist and Librarian at Conrad Grebel University College, is willing to be the new MHSC representative. This appointment would take place in January 2021 at MHSC's annual meeting. Bert also said he had asked Jon Isaak if Jon would be willing to serve as chair of the Management Board during a transition period. Jon indicated he would be willing to help in such a transition period.

CONSENSUS 7: To appoint Jon Isaak as chair of the GAMEO Management Board.

We then discussed possible expansion of the Management Board, especially including academic bodies that are part of post-secondary institutions that have been sponsors of GAMEO. In effect they would move from being a donor to being an owner. This would broaden our base of support, and could help address our board's gender imbalance.

CONSENSUS 8: That Sam Steiner draw up a list of potential partners in Canada and the United States, and that John Roth, Jon Isaak and Sam Steiner work on a template for approaching potential partners.

We would issue invitations to new partners after unanimous approval at the next Management Board meeting.

10) Associate Editor

CONSENSUS 8: To appoint Bert Friesen as an Associate Editor, with emphasis on Hutterite content.

11) Next meeting

We discussed whether Zoom meetings, even in a post-pandemic world, might be our best use of resources, especially if the Management Board expands. We agreed that Zoom (or similar technology) should be used part of the time, but there is merit in building relationships in face-to-face meetings as well. For 2021 we agreed for now to assume a face-to-face meeting.

CONSENSUS 9: That the Management Board next meet in Ontario on May 20-21, 2021.

12) Adjournment at 12:45 am

Recorded by Sam Steiner