

MICHIGAN DISTRICT CONFERENCE MINUTES

August 15-17, 2008

The Church Alive: Past, Present and Future
Debbie Eisenbise, Moderator

Friday, August 15

7pm

- Opening Devotions: Moderator Debbie Eisenbise
- Introductions of guests: Frank Ramirez (preacher); Duane Grady (Congregational Life Team member – he'll lead a morning watch and Sunday School class); Marcia Shetler (from Bethany Seminary); Jay Wittmeyer (from Brethren Benefit Trust); Bob & Rachel Gross (from On Earth Peace); and Jo Young Switzer (from Manchester College) will be present tomorrow.
- Greeting One Another / Passing the Peace of Christ
- Seating and Consecrating the Delegates – Roya Stern (writing clerk) read and corrected delegate list (see final page). Debbie Eisenbise (Moderator) lead in the consecration of the delegate body by asking us to turn to page 49 in our conference booklet and reading bullet 2, 3 & 5 from the Resolution Urging Forbearance.
- Sung Response #407 “We are People of God’s Peace”

Meeting called to order at 7:30pm

- Affirmation of Parliamentarian – Our moderator-elect (Chris Campbell) was unable to fulfill her term and thus is not able to act as parliamentarian of these proceedings. We are asking that Gary Copenhaver be affirmed by the delegates to act in this position for the 2008 district conference. The delegate body confirmed Gary Copenhaver.
- Review of Rules (p. 13) – Gary Copenhaver referred us to the parliamentary procedures listed in the conference booklet and briefly highlighted several rules that were of most interest.
- Approval of Agenda – The agenda was passed out to delegates (yellow sheet). Items of business are listed in the conference booklet on p. 42. Additional items of business are on a tan sheet of paper that was handed out to delegates. In addition, if the district board Proposal Concerning Visioning and Restructuring (p. 42) is approved, the committee will need funding. The district board is requesting that MEEB finance the “Vision and Structuring Committee.” The amount of their request has yet to be approved by MEEB. If the amount MEEB wishes to give exceeds \$1,500 the delegate body must approve the amount. This motion, “MEEB Motion to Fund” will be added to the agenda on Saturday a.m. after the Proposal for Visioning and Restructuring (about 11:20), if needed. There was a motion to approve the agenda and the new items of business. It was seconded. The agenda was approved.
- * Approval of 2007 District Conference Minutes (pp. 54-59) - There was a motion to approve the minutes from the 2007 district conference. It was seconded. The minutes were approved.
- Presentation of the Ballot for election on Saturday (pp. 41-46) – Dan Joseph presented the ballot in the absence of the Nominating Committee chair. He noted that the ballot is on page 41-46. Camp Board members to be affirmed are on page 28. He asked if there were any nominations from the floor. None were offered at this time.

Reports:

- District Executive (p. 14) – Marie Willoughby (District Executive). She noted this was the 25th district conference at this location. She encouraged churches to allow pastors the time to come to district conference each year. She noted there were only 7 pastors at the Pastor’s Luncheon of the 21 active pastors in the district. She distributed packets to the delegates and pastors. She also announced her retirement date as February 14, 2009. There was a motion to approve the District Executive’s Report. It was seconded. The report was approved.
- District Board (p. 15) – Mary Gault (District Board Chair). The Detroit First lease ends this month and the district will need to find something else to do with this facility.
 - New Church Development Committee - Mary Gault (District Board Chair). The New Church Development Committee has not been fully formed. They request people to be on this committee.

There will be workshops on new church development Saturday, and she encourages people to attend to find out more.

- Child Protection Policy Implementation Committee – Mary Gault (District Board Chair). The implementation plan is not ready yet. It is in place at Camp Brethren Heights. The committee is asking for one additional year to get the plan in place. The delegate body does not need to vote on this, since there was no time deadline given to this committee.

There was a motion to approve the District Board's Report. It was seconded. The report was approved.

- Standing Committee Delegate (p. 27) – John Willoughby. This is his last report since his term is at an end. He talked about issues they dealt with on the Programs and Arrangements Committee. He had a letter from David Shumate (moderator for the 2009 Annual Conference) sending his greetings since he could not be with us this weekend.

There was a motion to approve the Standing Committee Delegate's Report. It was seconded. The report was approved.

- Shalom Team (p. 16) – Anita Smith Buckwalter. She had a handout for the moderators and pastors at each church. She told us about a seminar at Camp Mack coming up: Keeping a Cool Head in a Hot Meeting. She also noted another workshop: Exploring Consensus Decision Making.

There was a motion to approve the Shalom Team's Report. It was seconded. The report was approved.

- Historians (p. 16) – Beth DuBois. She noted that she did not set up the Heritage Trail at district conference due to her other commitments (as conference director).

There was a motion to approve the Historian's Report. It was seconded. The report was approved.

- Citation & visit by Alexander Mack Jr. (Zander Willoughby) - Beth DuBois and Zander Willoughby (age 12, as Alexander Mack Jr.) present a citation to Gary Heisler for his 20 years of service as Conference Manager. Alexander Mack Jr. noted that Gary is a descendant of his.

Reports:

- Ministry Commission (p. 17) – Don Leaf. There is an Ethics Training Workshop in the fall (it is open to pastors and any other interested individuals).

There was a motion to approve the Ministry Commission's Report. It was seconded. The report was approved.

- Nurture Commission (p. 18) – Tim Smith.

- Sr. High Youth (p. 18) – Michele Kennedy has been the only official advisor over the past year. Her term of service is ending.

Betsy Grant (Youth Cabinet President) – They have restructured their cabinet this past year. They have gone from a 12 to 7 person cabinet by eliminating the treasurer-in-training position and combining the Camp and District Board representatives. She informed us who the new cabinet members are: Betsy Grant, President; Erin Tomlonson, Vice President; Zeb Hammond-Stone, Treasurer; Devon Rossman, Secretary; Matthew Murray and Casey Popielarz, District and Camp Board Representatives; Brittney Buffkin, Publicity. She noted the conference store hour, that they have plates for sale, and that they will be having a car wash on Saturday. These events are all to help fund NYC.

- Jr. High Youth (p. 18) – They have had no advisors for the past several years. Churches have sponsored rallies and there have been some Brethren Beliefs Retreats at the camp for this group.

There was a motion to approve the Nurture Commission's Report. It was seconded. The report was approved.

- Witness Commission (p. 25) – Linda Burr.

- Disaster Response (p. 23) – Linda Burr presented for Tom Burr. She noted that a group went to Minnesota. She also note that if we can get enough people interested, we can schedule a week for Michigan District (maybe a nice sunny spot during the winter months).

- CROP/CWS (p. 25) – Jim Kinsey is our representative but he was not present.

- Peace Coordinator (p. 26) - Bob Schnepf.

- BVS – Brenda King. She handed out a report since she did not get hers in the booklet. She urged people to consider BVS in their retirement.

- The Church in Drive (p. 26) – Nate Polzin. He brought 9 visitors from Church in Drive and Standing in the Gap to District Conference. He noted that this was about ¼ of the congregation. He had Mike Ziedermann, Shilo Slaughter and Shay Slaughter speak to the delegates.

There was a motion to approve the Witness Commission's Report. It was seconded. The report was approved.

○ Camp Brethren Heights

- Staff (p. 28) – Jennifer Crispin. She noted that they had 111 campers this season: 15 at Sampler Camp; 34 at Camp 45; 18 at Camp 67; 19 at Camp 89; and 25 at Camp 100. That is a 22% increase from last season. There were 46 staff over the summer. She asked us to attend a Benefit Concert at Camp on September 6.
 - Camp Board (pp. 28-31) - Barry Barto.
 - Approval of 2009 Camp Budget (pp. 30-31 & 52-53) – Marilyn Eccles. The motion to approve the budget comes from camp board and does not need a second. The budget was approved.
 - Affirmation of Camp Board Members & Camp Board Representatives to District Board (p. 28) – The motion to affirm the camp board members comes from camp board and does not need a second. The following members were affirmed: Becky Phillips (Beaverton); Henry List (Crystal); Jennifer Betts (Flint); Erin Tomlonson (Skyridge); Ann Arlt (Marilla); Denise Rossman (New Haven); and Brenda King (Zion).
- Announcements
 - Adjourned at 9:25 p.m. until Sat. 10:15a.m.

Saturday, August 16

10:15am

- Seating of the Delegates – Roya Stern (writing clerk) read and corrected delegate list (see final page).
- Introductions / Announcements – Jo Young Switzer was introduced to the delegates.
- Greeting One Another / Passing the Peace of Christ
- Opening Devotions: visit of Thomas Major (Dan McRoberts) & Sara Righter Major (Mary Gault)
- Sung Response #447 “O Jesus, I Have Promised”

Meeting was called to order at 10:45 a.m.

Business Item:

- Voting for District Leadership – Nominations were closed. Ballots passed out. Results will be given before close of morning business.

Reports:

- Manchester College (pp. 36-37) – Jo Young Switzer gave a brief talk and showed a dvd about the college. There was a motion to approve the Manchester College Report. It was seconded. The report was approved.
 - Affirmation of Trustees at Large - Phil Joseph (trustee from Michigan District). He asked that we approve the election of trustees. The following trustees were approved for 5 year terms to expire December 31, 2013: Continuing at large member, Elvin Zook; Proposed members, Sara Edgerton, Marsha Link, Larry Rowland, and John Zeglis.
- Stewards Commission (p. 19) - Bob Philips. He noted that the Later Day Saints will quit renting Detroit First at the end of this month.
 - Treasurer and Financial Secretary (pp. 20-23) – Lee Long (Financial Secretary) gave handouts of the 6-month report for the 2008 budget. He noted that Sunfield sold to a private individual. Tiffany Herrold (Treasurer, report p. 21) gave handouts of the treasurer's report January -June 2008.
 - Rau Farm (p. 21) – John Willoughby. He spoke briefly about what Rau Farm is.
 - MEEB (pp. 19 & 24) – Mark Ward. He noted that guidelines for requests and request forms were on-line and could be accessed via MichiganCOB.org.There was a motion to approve the Steward Commission's Report. It was seconded. The report was approved.

5 minute break given

Business Items:

○ 2009 District Budget (pp.50-51) – Lee Long presented. There were concerns raised from the delegate body about this being, yet again, a deficit budget. Bill Raymor (Crystal) challenged the Stewards to bring a balanced budget next year. Elaine Foster (Onkama) asked how we are meeting the budget. It was noted that we have \$20,000 in the checkbook currently, but if we spend past that we might need to request funds from MEEB. Brian Mackie (New Life Christian Fellowship) asked if rent from Detroit First was going to the general budget. Lee Long said that it is not. District conference would need to vote to transfer this money to the general fund for them to use it. At this point the money from the rental is held separately for special projects (e.g. Church in Drive, Camp Brethren Heights, etc.). Frances Townsend (District Board Secretary) noted that is a policy not to take assets from things like the closure of a church and put them in the general budget. We are holding some of this money because we aren't sure of the district's future needs. Tim Smith noted that we never spend as much as we budget. He said the reason we don't take this money out is because a commission might need it in the future. Dan McRoberts (Hope) and Brian Mackie (New Life) both noted that as delegates we need to take our responsibility seriously, and if we vote for this budget we should encourage our churches to help meet it. Mary Gault (District Board Chair) noted that when we do our Restructuring/Envisioning she hopes we will look at finances and be more responsible in the future. There was a motion to approve the 2009 District Budget. It was seconded. The budget was approved.

• **Announcements**

• Results of the Election of District Leadership were as follows: Bill Sumner, Moderator for 2009; Robert Wave, Moderator-elect; Jennie Betts, Program and Arrangements Committee; Frank Polzin, Standing Committee delegate; Nathan Polzin, Commission on Ministry; John Durnbaugh, Commission on Nurture; Jim Root, Commission of Stewards; Jennie Deweese, Commission on Witness. Christina Hamilton was affirmed as Camp Board Representative to the District Board. Dan Joseph was affirmed to be on the Nominating and Personnel Committee. Christina Campbell was affirmed to be on the Shalom Team.

• Adjourned at 12:01 p.m. (for lunch) until Sat. 1:15 p.m.

• Back from lunch break at 1:15 p.m. Roya Stern asked if there were changes in number of delegates present. It was noted that Junior King was not here for the p.m. session.

• Hymn #76 “Praise, I Will Praise You, Lord”

• Opening Devotions: visit from John Kline (Don Stroup)

• Sung Response: #150 “Wonderful Grace of Jesus”

Business Item, continued:

○ Request for MEEB Transfer of Funds – see the tan handout, “A. Request from MEEB for transfer of funds.” The motion is to transfer \$10,000 from the Detroit First lease to Bethany Training and another \$10,000 to license training.

This motion comes from MEEB and does not need a second. Motion approved.

○ Proposal for Visioning and Restructuring (p. 42) – Mary Gault (District Board Chair). There was some discussion on this proposal. Bill Raymor (Crystal) asked if we have names for an interim district executive if this passes. Mary Gault (District Board Chair) says there are some names they've considered.

The motion comes from district board and does not need a second. This was approved.

• Because the Proposal for Visioning and Restructuring was approved, there are two new items of business that must follow.

Business Item:

○ Nominating Committee needs to ask if there are any nominations from the floor to be on the Visioning and Restructuring Committee. If anyone has someone to nominate they must see Marie Willoughby (District Executive) or Brenda King (Nominating Committee) in the next 15 minutes.

○ MEEB Motion to Fund: Mary Gault (District Board Chair). The motion is as follows: The District Board has requested funds from MEEB in the amount of \$5,000 for the funding of the “Vision and Structuring Committee.” MEEB has approved this money in the event that District Conference gives it's approval (District Conference must authorize anything over \$1,500).

This comes from the District Board and MEEB and does not need a second. The motion was approved.

Reports: Denominational Agencies: Marcia Shetler (Bethany) and Jay Wittmeyer (BBT), Presenters.

▪ General Board – Frances Townsend, Michigan representative to the general board.

- Association of Brethren Caregivers (p. 34) – Dan McRoberts was on the board. Now he will serve a 3 year term on Ministry & Mission Board (the board that is the combination of ABC and the General Board). Note: Marian Thornton will also be on the Ministry & Mission board.
 - Brethren Benefit Trust (pp. 32-33)
 - Bethany Theological Seminary (p. 35)
 - On Earth Peace (p. 39) – Bob Gross is present at District Conference to lead a workshop, so he also spoke for a few minutes.
 - Mutual Aid Association (p. 38)
- There was a motion to approve the Denominational Reports. It was seconded. The reports were approved.
- Business Items:
 - Additional Ballot for Committees – Dan Joseph. Dan had each person on the ballot stand up and say something about themselves and what they could bring to this committee.
 - Resolution Urging Forbearance (pp. 42 & 47-49) – John Willoughby spoke to tell us this is NOT polity. This is a call to remind us to have forbearance with each other. This comes from District Board with the amendments from Annual Conference (so see pages 47-49 in the conference booklet for the original version, and then tan handout for amendments). Mike Rath (Drayton Plains) wanted to make sure this resolution would not change any past actions taken by the district. It was noted that it would not, but if we felt we handled things without forbearance, we could take a second look at past business. Several people spoke in favor of the resolution.
This comes from the District Board and does not need a second. The motion was approved.
 - Affirmation of the Status of The Church in Drive (p. 26) – Mary Gault (District Board Chair). Marie Willoughby (District Executive) expressed excitement over the affirmation. Ann Seuss (Lansing) welcomed the members from Church in Drive and told them when we play the pedigree game we don't mean to make them feel left unwelcome.
This comes from the District Board and does not need a second. The motion was approved unanimously.
 - Results of Voting
Voting results for the District Vision and Restructuring Committee: Debbie Eisenbise, Former Moderator of District Conference; Marcy Abner and Hollie Anderson Saraswat, Non-District Board Members.
 - Announcements – Debbie Eisenbise (Moderator) made a presentation to Marie Willoughby (District Executive) of roses: one for each year of her service as D.E. Marie received a standing ovation from those present as thanks for the time she has given to the district.
 - Closing Devotions: Moderator
 - Sung Benediction: #418 “Move in our Midst”
 - Adjourn at 3:22 p.m. until 2009 District Conference: August 14-16, 2009

Submitted by Roya Stern, Writing Clerk

Accepted on 9/07/08 by the Program and Arrangement Committee as the official minutes to appear in the 2009 District Conference Booklet.

2008 District Conference Delegates

Present both Friday and Saturday unless otherwise marked

Beaverton

Dan Whitmer
Bob Schnepf

Crystal

Henry List, pastor (Saturday only)
Mike Noll
Cary Duke
Bill Raymor

Drayton Plains

Michael Rath, pastor
Mary McVicar, Board Chair
Jack Durnbaugh

Flint

Donald Flint, pastor
Nancy Hammond-Chaffin
Jennifer Betts

Hope

Douglas A Reichenbach, pastor
Joe McRoberts, Board Chair
Jean Bergy
Chris Hamilton (Saturday only)

Lakeview

Don Stroup
Janet Stroup
Judy Hamilton
Bob Hamilton

Lansing

Anita Smith Buckwalter, pastor (Friday only)
Anne Suess, Board Chair
Lori Waas
Paul BrunDelRe
Beverly Leaf (Saturday only)

Marilla

Joe Wave, pastor
Don Willoughby, moderator
Jan Thomas

Midland

Art Smith, pastor
Bill Sumner, Board Chair (Saturday only)
Darlene Smith
Marianne Ray

Muskegon

William (Bill) Naill, pastor
Lavonne Smith
Betty Naill
Gail Anderson

New Haven

Brian Ruth, pastor
Nancy Davis
Carla Davis

New Life Christian Fellowship

Merritt Bongard, pastor (Saturday only)
Brian Mackie, pastor
Jim Root (Saturday only)
Marie Root (Friday only)
Frank Polzin

Onkama

Frances Townsend, pastor
Paul Foster, Board Chair
Elaine Foster
Mark Ward

Shalom

Paul Versluis, pastor
Tim Smith

Skyridge

Ike Porter
Karen Tomlonson
Marilyn Eccles

Sugar Ridge

David Wood (Saturday only)
Mark Wahr (Saturday only)
Marge Cheladyn

Trinity

Michael Fletcher, pastor
Denzel Short
Keri Krakow (Cheladyn)
Hollie Anderson (Saturday only)

Woodgrove

Linda Wise
Tara

Zion

Cal Meiser
Brenda King
Junior King (not present Saturday p.m.)
Ken Good