

2024 Convention Minutes - Draft

Meghan Plett, Board Secretary



ONTARIO CONFERENCE OF MENNONITE BROTHERN CHURCHES 93rd Annual Convention Hosted at Scott Street Church, St. Catharines

Feb. 23-24, 2024

Theme: Being a Great News People

Attendance: 132

97 Convention Members and 35 guests, representing 21 of 23 member churches, and 2 of our 4 Associate Member Churches.

Friday Night Celebration Service 7pm-9pm

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS: Kristi Lee and Rob Patterson
2. WORSHIP IN MUSIC
3. WHERE WE'VE BEEN: Ryan Jantzi

God has been faithful to us through 2023. A year ago we made some hard decisions, and it was a time of uncertainty with relational strains. Over the last year, God has drawn us together in unity, focus, a shared identity, and a sense of calling. Of course there are challenges and points of sorrow, but there are also beautiful stories that we celebrate of how the good news of Jesus is growing among us. Churches taking steps of faith, pastors supporting one another, and kingdom fruit across ONMB churches because of God's faithfulness to us. So we gather together to celebrate the gospel, the greatest news of all.

4. KEYNOTE: Philip and Robyn Serez

Philip and Robyn shared their story of God's faithfulness and the necessity of nurturing faith and discipleship in an ongoing way already, so that our lives are built on the solid rock of Jesus which will withstand the storms of life. Jesus meets us in our place of pain and invites us into deeper fellowship with him.

They invited us to sit with the Holy Spirit, listen to what he has to say to each of us tonight, and respond in obedience while Jordan Duerrstein led the hymn "Take My Life and Let It Be".

5. WHERE WE'RE GOING: Trevor Seath

Trevor envisions ONMB growing in relationship with Jesus, developing new leaders, and deepening our global relationships as God continues to write our story.

6. COMMUNION:

It's significant that when we remember Jesus' sacrifice, we're taking something in to nourish, strengthen, and sustain us.

7. WORSHIP IN MUSIC

8. CLOSING COMMENTS AND PRAYER

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Saturday February 24, 2024 9:00am-4:35pm

9. WORSHIP SONG AND WELCOME:

Kristi, Trevor, and Ryan welcomed everyone and opened in prayer. We joined in worship through singing “God of Abraham”, “King of Kings” and “Take My Life and Let it Be”

10. Commissioning Trevor Seath:

Michelle Knowles and Jeff Jantzi introduced Trevor. Together we as a community and Trevor himself made commitments to each other and to God. We then prayed a blessing over Trevor.

11. Opening Address:

Trevor Seath envisioned us as a Great News people who can build each other up, reach real needs in our communities, province and country, and learn from the global church.

12. Call to Order:

Doug Valerio and Michelle Knowles gave instructions re: voting and asking questions. Many of the motions that will be made today have corresponding breakout sessions to provide more information and space to ask questions, as well as share about opportunities on the horizon.

13. Quorum:

We have 2 of 4 associate churches represented. We have 21 out of 23 member churches represented. We have 97 Convention Members and 35 guests, meaning there are 132 people with us today.

14. Reports and Motions:

MOTION C24-1 MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED that JP Hayashida (WMB), Tracy Lepp (South Point Community Church), AND Ed Korschewitz (Grace MB) be approved as parliamentarians.

AND THAT Christine Hiebert (Cornerstone), Tamille Richardson (Evergreen Heights), Renee Serez (WMB Church) and Natasha Baines (Manotick) be approved as ballot counters.

MOTION C24-2 MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED that the agenda be accepted as presented.

MOTION C24-3 MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED that we receive the committee and board reports as distributed in the advance in the Convention Book.

MOTION C24-4 MOVED, SECONDED, and TABLED that the minutes from Convention 2023, as presented in the Convention Book, be approved.

Discussion:

Michael VandenEnden, Grantham MB, proposed an amendment to the 2023 Convention minutes, requesting to add more information to the record of discussion for motion C23-15: first to provide a more detailed record of his proposed amendment to motion C23-15, and second to add in comments he had made of which there was no written record.

After consultation with the parliamentarians, it was decided to make some amendments to the draft minutes and table the motion for approval in the afternoon.

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15. Board Chair Report:

As we've navigated through some difficult decisions last year, we are grateful for the stories of how our faithful God has been moving across our province among our churches. Grace MB Church and Radiant City Church have decided to form a new congregation called Belmont Village Church. Brent Kipfer offered a prayer of blessing and encouragement over Grace MB and its members.

Michelle thanked the ONMB Board and Nominating Committee. Michelle called up Ryan and Kristi to honour them for their open-handed, gracious service. They have both served with excellence. Doug prayed a blessing over them.

16. Interim Executive Director Report:

Ryan is grateful for the opportunity to serve and strengthen the ONMB churches. He encouraged us to continue to work on making our churches safe, welcoming spaces, while holding fast to our convictions as we graciously grow in our relationship with 2SLGBTQ+ people.

17. Jesus Stories

Life Point Fellowship and Manotick Community Church
Mike Dale and Doug Valerio

Doug: Manotick Community Church has boldly stepped out in faith and seen God provide for their needs as they've been able to better reach their growing community in a relevant way.

Mike: Life Point was deeply impacted by Covid, resulting in the loss of their building in 2023. Their senior pastor retired in 2022 with only 10-15 people remaining in the congregation. Mike and a former student from his youth group built up a core group of people (half of whom are in their 20s) and in June of 2023 they reopened their doors with an influx of at least 20 new people attending.

Ryan: Let's honour Mike as he's raising up young people and passing the baton. Please keep on praying for Life Point and Manotick, that more people would know Jesus through them.

18. Breakout 1

Lunch

Breakout 2

19. Afternoon Session:

MOTION C24-4 MOVED, SECONDED, and APPROVED that the minutes from Convention 2023, as amended, be approved.

The amendment that was made to the Convention 2023 minutes was the addition of the following information to the record of discussion for motion C23-15:

Michael VandenEnden, Grantham MB - Given that Southridge Community Church is three distinct congregations which includes Vineland, the oldest MB congregation in Niagara, he would like to amend the motion to name all 3 locations: Glenridge, Welland, and Vineland. This amendment was not approved.

Michael VandenEnden, Grantham MB - He believes that some of the largest churches in ONMB have

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indicated that their willingness to remain part of ONMB hinges on this decision and the direction it indicates ONMB is heading.

Discussion on the amended minutes:

Michael VandenEnden, Grantham MB remarked that the proposed revision to the 2023 minutes did not report specifically what he understood about some of the largest churches in ONMB threatening to leave if Southridge Community Church was not removed. He warned that we should not be too eager to edit history and asserted that what he had said should be recorded in the 2023 minutes in detail.

Michelle expressed appreciation for Michael's candid comments. She also noted that comments and questions have all been recorded in summary form in the minutes. Since the minutes are not a word-for-word record in general, Michelle asserted that the proposed revisions are in keeping with the other recorded comments.

Jordan Duerrstein, Scott Street MB Church expressed he was glad that a more detailed record of Michael's proposed amendment to the 2023 motion to remove Southridge Community Church was recorded in the proposed revision to the minutes. Jordan asserted that documentation is important, so if it had just said "Southridge" it would be erasing part of the dynamic at play.

Michelle commented that the dialogue and conversation is appreciated since we want to process these matters well as a family.

20. National Ministry Team Reports:

Jim Bell - CCMBC Legacy CFO

Ministry-focused Financial Services. Investing in Kingdom growth together.

Gave a summary of the services offered. Shared a vision of what an investment in Legacy facilitates, working together to support our churches and grow the kingdom of our loving God.

21. NFLT Report:

Ken Esau - NFLT Director

Brings greetings from the NFLT.

Thankful for the relationship with CCMBC and ONMB. To create and cultivate a community of healthy disciple-making churches and ministries, faithfully joining Jesus in his mission.

Who is CCMBC? 230+ MB churches in Canada

One of our main goals is to produce healthy churches.

Orthodoxy - right/straight + glory

Orthopraxy - right/straight + practice

Orthopathy - right/straight + feeling

Qualities of a "healthy Church":

1. Before all else, growing in love and worship for the Triune God.
2. Promoting activities that lead people to grow in character more like Jesus.
3. Promoting widespread familiarity with God's biblical story.
4. Growing in understanding and unity around its core theological, ethical, and missional convictions.
5. Encouraging corporate church "habits" that promote health.
6. Living out missional faithfulness to the Great Commission and the Great Commandment.
7. Creating church structures and procedures that promote health.

CUSP - how can we help you as provinces to accomplish your 4 goals?

Spiritual health & theology, mission, dealership development, organizational health goals

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CCMBC - collection of MB Seminary, CCMBC Legacy Fund, Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, Multiply, Kindred Productions, CCMBC Executive Board, CCMBC National Ministry Team, CCMBC National Faith & Life Team

We're here to nurture and provide care, depending on God to grow our churches into his image for his glory.

22. MB Seminary Update:

Mark Wessner - MB Seminary

One of the mandates of the NMT is to operationalize the CUSP and our 4 priority areas. One of the 4 priority areas of the CUSP is Leadership Development which aims to support, equip and resource existing leaders while discovering and developing new leaders.

Leadership FrontCounter is intended to be a tool providing options and pathways to help develop leaders. It coordinates programs and people to help resource leaders across the country.

23. ONMB Nominating Committee Report:

Terry Shuh

We are nominating 2 new members to the ONMB Board: Jeff Martens, Cornerstone, and Tanya Janssen, Kingsfield-Zurich.

With Jeff Martens and Bill Stubbs leaving this committee, we'll be bringing 2 candidates to join our committee: Jeff Jantzi and Jordan Duerrstein.

MOTION C24-5 - MOVED, SECONDED, and APPROVED that the Board of Directors for the period commencing from Convention 2024 until Convention 2025 be made up of 11 members.

MOTION C24-6 - MOVED, SECONDED, and APPROVED that the following individuals be elected to the ONMB Board as members-at-large: Andrew Plett, Brent Kipfer, Noah Grossman, Meghan Plett, Jeff Martens, Tanya Janssen

MOTION C24-7 - MOVED, SECONDED, and APPROVED that all candidates for the nominating committee 2024 be acclaimed.

2024 Slate of Nominees for Nominating Committee include: Jordan Duerrstein, Jeff Jantzi, Tabitha VandenEnden, Terry Shuh

24. Jesus Stories:

Ryan Jantzi and Darren Milley – Power Serve

This is an emerging disciple-making initiative to engage truckers so that many would become fully committed, connected, and equipped disciples of Jesus Christ for the Glory of God through the use of social media —The Father Trucker on YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, as well as the app The Christian Trucker's Toolbox.

Darren's vision is such a great example of the creative power of the gospel. These are God-sized visions that God calls us to embrace and do together.

25. Financial Report:

Anita Boles, ONMB Treasurer

2023 was a year of transition and stability because of Ryan's leadership and the ways the churches stepped up and gave faithfully. We will need to see that level of generosity continue to meet our 2024 budget.

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In the fall, we sent out a video explaining the vision for the upcoming year. I encourage you to make sure that that video gets seen at least by your board, if not the whole congregation. We need to spread the word about what we do and why we're here and the need to pay staff and have a budget. I encourage you to consider your giving to ONMB. Let's pray and discern what God is asking of us this year. Thank you for your giving and support.

MOTION C24-8 - MOVED, SECONDED, and APPROVED [the amended motion] that the audited financial statements for 2023 be accepted.

MOTION C24-9 - MOVED, SECONDED, and APPROVED that the ONMB membership approve the use of a Review Engagement instead of an audit for 2024.

MOTION C24-10 - MOVED, SECONDED, and APPROVED that Bridgman and Durksen be appointed to perform the review engagement for 2024.

MOTION C24-11 - MOVED, SECONDED, and APPROVED that the operating budget for 2024 be approved as presented.

26. PFLT Report:

Karen West, PFLT Chair

Our report and mandate can be found on page 36-37 of your convention booklet.

27. ONMB Organizational Health Report:

Doug Valerio, Committee Chair

Full report found on page 39 of your convention booklet.

Thank you to all the people who stood on the committee this past year, especially Ryan Jantzi.

28. Mark Wessner, President of MB Seminary

Lifelong learning for lifelong mission

256 students taught, 382 lifelong learners, deficit free since 2020!

1. The best things in life are FREE, now including seminary. New students get your first 2 courses tuition free! We're doing this because we believe education, training, equipping is important.
2. One person. Can each church give the name of somebody in your church who you see as an emerging leader? Until we invite and invest in people, our systems and policies won't make anything happen.
3. Pray for MB Seminary. Every Monday morning Mark sends out an email with specific prayer requests.

29. Camp Crossroads Report:

Andrew Hiebert, Executive Director of Camp Crossroads

Mission: Camp Crossroads exists as a Christ-centred ministry to support the local church in making disciples and developing leaders.

Camp is a place for evangelism, discipleship, and developing leaders. In addition to Family Camp and Summer Camp, we host retreats, canoe trips, and are offering a brand new Gap Year Discipleship program this year.

We're also investing in rebuilding Camp through our program activities, infrastructure, and facilities.

30. Multiply Update:

Erin Coffey and Robyn Serez, Multiply

You're not alone; God is with you.

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Video from Bruce Enns, Multiply

Helping serve the church join in God's mission in 3 main ways:

- Sending out Missionaries
- Partnering with Nationals
- Helping Everyday Disciples Multiply

Robyn: Thank you to Erin and Joel for taking on multiple roles as the staff team decreases and Robyn and Philip's availability has decreased.

Joel has felt a deep conviction for every day disciple-making, and out of that calling will be moving to the secular marketplace at the end of April.

31. Jesus Story:

Ryan Jantzi and Derek Parenteau, Rugged Tree

God has placed Derek among us as an apostle and evangelist, as well as sent him out from us. Rugged Tree is an extension of a disciple-making team reaching out to First Nations people. They call us to share the gospel and see Christ renewing all things.

We're a prayer ministry with an orientation towards the least, the last, and the lost. The "amen" to our prayers is our actions to go, love, proclaim the good news, make disciples. Our answering action to do the work is where we walk in expectation of those prayers being answered.

32. Final Business:

MOTION C24-12 - MOVED, SECONDED, and APPROVED that the ballots be destroyed upon the approval of the minutes by the board secretary.

MOTION C24-13 - MOVED, SECONDED, and APPROVED that the Ontario Mennonite Brethren Convention 2024 be adjourned.

