

BOARD OF ELDERS MEETING
AUGUST 6-13, 2008

Present: Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson, Moderator; Rev. Elder Ken Martin, Region 1; Rev. Elder Jim Mitulski, Region 2; Rev. Elder Arlene Ackerman, Region 3; Rev. Elder Glenna Shepherd, Region 4; Rev. Elder Diane Fisher, Region 5; Rev. Elder Darlene Garner, Region 6; and Rev. Elder Lillie Brock, Region 7

Staff: Rev. Cindi Love, Connie Meadows, Irma Bauer Levesque

Joined by: Rev. Jeff Miner, Marvin Bagwell, Barb Crabtree, Julie Krueger, John Vespa, and Marsha Warren of the Board of Administration and Rev. Pat Bumgardner, Global Justice Team Chair; Rev. Kharma Amos, Theologies Team Chair; and Stan Kimer, Ecumenical-Interreligious Team Chair

MOTION 08.08.07.BOE.01 Motion by Rev. Ken Martin, seconded by Rev. Diane Fisher to extend the term for Board of Administration members Barb Crabtree, Marvin Bagwell and Julie Krueger until December 31, 2008.

M/S Approved

MOTION 08.08.07.BOE.02 Motion by Rev. Ken Martin, seconded by Rev. Diane Fisher to reappoint Board of Administration members Julie Krueger and Marvin Bagwell for terms running from January 1 through December 31, 2009

M/S Approved

MOTION 08.08.07.BOE.03 Motion by Rev. Ken Martin, seconded by Rev. Diane Fisher to reappoint Board of Administration members Rev. Jeff Miner, Barb Crabtree and John Vespa for terms running from January 2009 through December 2010.

M/S Approved

MOTION 08.08.08.BOE.04 Motion by Rev. Diane Fisher, seconded by Rev. Arlene Ackerman to adopt the mission statement "Tearing Down Walls, Building Up Hope."

M/S Approved

MOTION 08.08.08.BOE.05 Motion by Rev. Diane Fisher, seconded by Rev. Ken Martin to reappoint Chuck Phelan to the Board of Pensions from January 1, 2009 through December 31, 2010.

M/S Approved

MOTION 08.08.11.BOE.06 Motion by Rev. Darlene Garner, Seconded by Rev. Glenna Shepherd to approve the Human Rights Protocol:

M/S Approved

HUMAN RIGHTS PROTOCOL – ADOPTED AUGUST 11, 2008 BY THE BOARD OF ELDERS

What is the Human Rights Church?

Metropolitan Community Church mission in the world is Tearing Down Walls, and Building Up Hope, as we respond to issues of injustice in our world.

Philosophy:

We are called as Christians to:

- to stand in solidarity with those who are marginalized and oppressed,
- to be partners in working for change,
- to be witnesses who call attention to Human Rights abuses,
- to be a voice in the international community for justice,
- to lift up new generations of remarkable, far-reaching spiritual activists,
- to build on hope and create our future

What is justice?

Harper's dictionary defines justice as:

The demand of God for justice is so central that other responses to God are empty or diminished if they exist without it (Amos 5:21-24; Micah 6:6-8; Matthew 23:23).

God is the defender of the poor and the oppressed (Jeremiah 9:23-24, Psalm 10:17-18)

When we properly carry out justice, we are agents of divine will (Isaiah 59:15-16)

The context for the carrying out of justice is the creation of community and the preservation of people in it (Leviticus 25:35-36; Job 24:5; Psalm 107:36; Luke 7:29-30).

What are our base line standards?

- to only go where we are invited
- to assume we have a lot to learn
- to listen to our hosts
- to forge partnerships
- to respond when requested
- to be flexible to the realities and differences in establishing churches internationally

1. **To only go where we are invited:** MCC is approached by people and organizations from around the world asking for our assistance and support. Prioritizing our response is critical in managing our resources and responding to cries for justice around the world.

Criteria for Potential for Success:

- Assessment is key – need to consider nature of the contact, who, what, where, when, why and how
- We need to consider the impact of our involvement – are we the best people/organization to respond
- What resources, personnel and financial will be required and are they readily available
- Are there organizations willing to partner with us on this response
- Need to consider, potential for impact for the LGBT community, history of Christian Church in the region, political stability of country, nature and severity of the treatment of LGBT community, windows of opportunity

2. **To assume we have a lot to learn:** MCC has been invited to work in community with many cultures and countries.

- Do your research, read everything that you can find on the country you are going to, a useful tool in gathering information about nations is the internet. Also, The World Guide 2005/2006: See the World from a Different Angle (Paperback) by [Third World Institute](#) (Author)
- Check for recent stories in the news
- Look at what is happening regionally
- Check the political realities in countries near the region you are travelling to
- Find out everything you can about cultural and religious norms

3. **To listen to our hosts:** MCC has been invited and the experts on what is happening in any country are the people who live there.

- Listen and learn from the community who offered the invitation
- Check on the local customs and culture and imagine the implications
- Never do any press/media work without members of the indigenous community present and advising, listen to what it is they want the message to be

4. **To forge partnerships:** It is critical that we form partnerships and build bridges that unite as we do this work.

- There are often links with international organizations that are possible and supportive eg: Human Rights Watch, ILGA (ILGA Europe, ILGA Africa, ILGA Latin America), Amnesty etc.
- Many nations have limited LGBT organizations, but check with local groups to make contact with any organizations they might suggest
- Look for places where NGO's are invited to participate and try signing up
- Look for meetings that deal with Human Rights issues and get involved
- Stand with others who are marginalized and oppressed

5. **To respond when requested:** MCC is often asked to be present at or to do press conferences and/or TV and Radio.

- Always have a clear message that has been crafted with the community you are presenting with
- Ensure that you are always with an indigenous leader for all media coverage
- Create a short statement of introduction of yourself and the primary topic
- Never argue just politely disagree
- Carry many business cards with local contact information
- Have MCC printed materials available in the language of the country if possible and English
- If you are clergy, wear your collar
- If you are participating in a public event, such as Gay Pride, wear a rainbow stole (it attracts the media)
- Bring a local member of the community when you are answering questions, something as simple as turning and asking them if they have anything that they would like to add
- Practice before hand

6. **To be flexible to the realities and differences in establishing churches internationally :** People are often in situations where safety is the primary concern and until that is starting to become a reality, church is often not possible. The Human Rights work helps us to understand the culture and the issues and to build trust.

- A worship service may happen, but that does not mean that a church is being planted
- MCC's church planting initiative can be involved when the time has come for a church plant
- Church planting must be culturally relative and sensitive. The religious culture which is predominant within a community will often influence people's expectations and/or fears
- Church planting is a long term goal not may not be an immediate reality and that is okay

BE SAFE, WORK IN PARTNERSHIP, LEARN FROM THE HOSTS, BE FLEXIBLE AND OPEN, TRUST IN GOD!

MOTION 08.08.11.BOE.07 Motion by Rev. Darlene Garner, Seconded by Rev. Lillie Brock to grant the Human Rights Award to Rev. Elder Diane Fisher during General Conference 2010.

M/S 6 Approved, 1 Abstained

MOTION 08.08.11.BOE.08 Motion by Rev. Darlene Garner, Seconded by Rev. Arlene Ackerman to implement a process for evaluation and review of the MCC Strategic Plan. Further, as called for in *Moving Forward in Faith*, the 2001 document that introduced the current MCC structure, move to implement the seven-year structural review.

M/S Approved

MOTION 08.08.11.BOE.09 Motion by Rev. Darlene Garner, Seconded by Rev. Diane Fisher that the Board of Elders will develop and implement an intentional plan for assessing and supporting churches that wish to meet the criteria for continued affiliation with MCC.

M/S Approved

MOTION 08.08.11.BOE.10 Motion by Rev. Darlene Garner, Seconded by Rev. Ken Martin that the Board of Elders extends its extreme gratitude, honor, and respect to Rev. Elder Jim Mitulski for his service as a member of the Board of Elders and to acknowledge especially the high quality of spiritual leadership that he brought to his ministry with MCC Region 2, the Office of Clergy Development and the Church Transition Ministry and that he carries forward with him as he enters into ministry as the Pastor of New Spirit MCC/UCC/DOC.

M/S Approved

MOTION 08.08.11.BOE.12 Motion by Rev. Darlene Garner, Seconded by Rev. Lillie Brock that four members of the Board of Elders will provide support to the churches of Region 2 as follows:

Rev. Elder Diane Fisher: Illinois / Iowa / Minnesota / Wisconsin

Rev. Elder Lillie Brock: Kansas / Missouri

Rev. Elder Arlene Ackerman: Georgia / Tennessee

Rev. Elder Ken Martin: Alabama / Louisiana / Mississippi / Longview, TX

M/S Approved

MOTION 08.08.11.BOE.13 Motion by Rev. Darlene Garner, Seconded by Rev. Arlene Ackerman to recommend the hiring of staff members to support the responsibilities of the Board of Elders in the areas of clergy development and congregational development. Given the particular nature of these areas of work, the Board of Elders would cooperate with and support the Executive Director to develop the position descriptions, make the hiring decisions, and provide supervision to these staff positions.

M/S Approved

MOTION 08.08.11.BOE.14 Motion by Rev. Darlene Garner, Seconded by Rev. Diane Fisher that there will be a meeting of the Board of Elders in December 2008 in Austin, Texas.

M/S Approved

MOTION 08.08.11.BOE.15 Motion by Rev. Darlene Garner, Seconded by Rev. Lillie Brock to receive the Report on the 2010 General Conference, including the creation of a General Conference Steering Committee.

M/S Approved

MOTION 08.08.11.BOE.16 Motion by Rev. Darlene Garner, Seconded by Rev. Ken Martin to work cooperatively to establish a joint study team of members of both MCC and The Fellowship to explore the critical issues related to the creation of deeper and broader relationships with one another, including our global ministries, credentialing, church growth, church planting, church revitalization, education and training.

M/S Approved

Connie Meadows
August 15, 2008