

**Beachy Amish Mennonite Ministers' Business Meeting Minutes**  
**April 5-7, 2011**  
**Beachy A.M. Churches of Lancaster County, held at Ridgeview Mennonite, PA**

*(The business meeting presentations were interspersed throughout the meeting rather than clustered into two longer sessions, as was practiced in the past.)*

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6, 2011**

**10:17-10:27am: Penn Valley Christian Retreat—Dave King**

Annual reports are available, including a financial statement and letter from the administrator. Ballots for elections will be mailed to congregations in June. Beachys continue to be a minority of attendees at seminars, and more are invited. One couple from Lebanon that attends regularly said that it's a good way to take a vacation, receive a blessing, and keep costs low. At the annual representative meeting on March 25, topics and coordinators for upcoming seminars are planned. Two new seminars have been added: one for returning missionaries and one regarding what we should do when the next generation does not pick up the Anabaptist vision, both to be offered in 2012. Renovations are nearly complete. Costs totaled about \$165,200. Short term loans totaling \$50,000 were given to complete the project; all other bills are paid. Other projects in need of funds include replacing curtains (\$200), installing PowerPoint projection equipment (\$3,000), and adding partitions (\$1,600). The operating fund is tight now because of recent expenses involving the furnace, water heater, and kitchen appliances. Contributions to a specific fund should be labeled as such.

**11:35-11:55am: Missions Interest Committee, Part I**

*Lorne Kuepfer, Board Chairman:* Thanks are extended for contributions of prayers, staff, and funds. A tax return from 2009 and financial report from 2010 are available.

*Comeragh Wilderness Camp, Mel Glick:* The goal is to provide the same sort of therapeutic ministry as offered at other camps like Bald Eagle, but the outworking is different because it's another country and culture. The government has granted permission to enter the forest with the camp, including construction of a campsite and buildings, but the residential program will not start for at least two years. In the mean time, this summer, the day camp will be extended to three days/two nights with the goal of helping a few, a lot more. Wes Sensenig has been cutting reeds from the river and using them to build. Around 17,000 trees have been planted on the purchased land. In supporting this camp, MIC is looking more to churches located in the Midwest, as churches in the East have concentrated their attention on existing boys' camps in their region.

*Sioux Lookout and Red Lake churches, Mel Glick:* The congregations at Sioux Lookout and Red Lake have not been able to harmonize with MIC and the Beachy constituency. Since this course is difficult to change, these churches are transitioning to indigenous control over a five year period, with a goal of self-government by 2015; this process is now in the second year. These two congregations are seeking other affiliation. MIC affirms the church planting work done at Sioux Lookout and Red Lake in the past. The three congregations at Hudson, Kenora, and Sioux Narrows remain as MIC administrated congregations in the Northwest Ontario region.

*Northwest Ontario, Darrel Nisly:* Nine couples and four singles currently work in the five communities. Two couples to minister are needed, one in Sioux Narrows and one in Hudson. The school in Sioux Lookout was originally for missionary children, but now has many nationals, including nine with fetal alcohol syndrome disorder. The missionaries struggle in relating to the First Nations people, who desire self-determination and often resist foreign instruction.

*Dunmore East Christian Fellowship, Dan Yoder:* Presently, there are 14 families and some singles who regularly attend services. Six are North American and eight are from a variety of backgrounds, constituting a total of around 10 nationalities. Others from Britain and Germany have visited and desire more teaching. Many who have moved to Dunmore East are concerned about the future of their children. The mission has started an annual family conference in which interested seekers from other countries may come and stay for several days. This past summer, the Ken Miller family moved to Ireland to replace the Ed Yoder family. In the past six months, William McGrath has been suffering visibly from dementia; his mind is failing. Ireland's economy has been worse than America's, and MIC's support has been invaluable through this time.

#### 1:44-1:59pm: **Moderator/ Introduction of the Newly Ordained—Daniel Lapp**

It is noted that many continue visiting in the lobby after services begin in the auditorium.

Twelve newly ordained brethren introduced themselves. As each made an introduction, his co-ministers stood. A prayer was offered by Bishop John U. Glick for the newly ordained.

Name	Office	Church	Location	Date
Nathan Lapp	Bishop	Grace M.F.	Bastrop, TX	June 13, 2010
Manferd McGrath	Bishop	Dayspring C.F.	Taylorsville, NC	Oct. 17, 2010
Simon Schrock	Bishop	Pilgrim C.F.	Stuarts Draft, VA	April 3, 2011
Michael Mast	Deacon	Shady Lawn M.	Mountain View, AR	April 24, 2008
Marlin Bontrager	Deacon	Woodlawn A.M.	Goshen, IN	Sept. 19, 2010
Marcus Kauffman	Minister	Kempsville A.M.	Virginia Beach, VA	June 2008
Arlyn Mast	Minister	Arlington A.M.	Arlington, KS	April 19, 2009
Lavon Stoltzfus	Minister	Messiah A.M.F.	Holmes County, OH	May 9, 2010
Daniel Fisher	Minister	Shade Mountain C.F.	Mifflin, PA	May 30, 2010
Ivan Stoltzfus	Minister	Shekinah C.F.	Lewisburg, PA	June 27, 2010
David Wittmer	Minister	Mt. Olive Church	Daviess County, IN	July 25, 2010
Enos Byler	Commissioned	Crawford Co. M.	Guys Mills, PA	Feb., 2011

#### 1:59-2:18pm: **Missions Interest Committee, Part II**

*David Herschberger, Sioux Lookout:* The book ministry is expanding from nine to seventeen communities to meet growing interest. A second airplane and a larger building have been acquired. Some of these communities can only be reached by flying. Donations are welcome for continued expansion, book purchases, plane maintenance, and extension into Manitoba. \$200,000 is presently needed, and donations should be designated for this specific project.

*Ken Nisly, Hillcrest Home:* All staff needs are presently met. An essential part of Hillcrest's mission is to be a witness to the elderly; several stories were shared to demonstrate the impact staff are making.

*Paul Beiler, Faith Mission Home:* FMH provides residents with training and staff the opportunity to gain life experience as carry out the role of teacher or parent to handicapped residents. Several stories were shared to demonstrate this. Numerous staff have become teachers after VS at Faith Mission. Twice a year, the staff is given in-house training. The FMH display announces current needs, including the need for staff ladies.

**2:18pm: Moderator—Daniel Lapp**

Announcements: you may bring drinks into the auditorium; this may help you come in more quickly after break. All should have received ballot books for elections.

**2:20-2:54pm: Bishop Committee, Part I—David L. Yoder (Chairman)**

The Beachy constituency has an appreciation for congregational autonomy, which impacts the way we relate with each other. A major question we've discussed is who we are and how we came into being. Often, when a group forms, they have a set of core values, mission statement, or constitution, but that's not how the Beachy constituency was formed. A year ago the Bishop Committee sent out a survey to all Beachy ministers, and the answers were helpful in understanding the perspective of the ordained ministerial body. The non-use of the radio has been a defining mark in the past, but now, some congregations may not be handling it that way in their churches. "If you feel like your church is at variance with the rest of the constituency, one way to show deference is to withhold your vote. We're not asking you not to vote, but it's one way to show your deference." A report of the bishop meeting convened in December, 2010 at Maranatha Fellowship, in Sugarcreek, OH was sent out and should be shared with others in your churches. A follow up bishop meeting will be planned in 2011, again at Maranatha Fellowship, as this is a convenient central location. David Yoder drafted and read a 2011 Bishop Committee statement, prepared in consultation with the committee. *Refer to the Bishop Committee Statement 2011.* Perspectives were further shared on the ideology of preferences, convictions, discernment, administration, and brotherhood. The Internet was used as an example.

Roman B. Mullet's term as a member of the Bishop Committee is expiring. In a ballot mailed prior to the meeting, nominations were taken for a replacement. The assembled ministers voted by ballot among those top nominees that consented to be on the ballot:

- ✓ Laban Kauffman, Zion C.F., Middlefield, OH
- Ben Stoltzfus, Pequea A.M., Lancaster County, PA
- Glenn Yoder, Rosewood F., Shipshewana, IN

**2:54-2:59pm: Masters International Ministries—Nathan Yoder**

MIM was founded twenty years ago through the vision of concerned brethren who toured Kiev, Ukraine with William McGrath, after the fall of the Iron Curtain. A mission base was established in the outskirts of Kiev, Ukraine's capital city. Over the years the city has grown to the point where MIM decided to relocate the headquarters to a more rural, less expensive location in the un-churched village of Gorodetske, more than an hour out of Kiev. Today, there are four MIM administered churches: Kiev, the original congregation with many converts, plus smaller, more recently formed congregations in Berezyanka, Cernovtzi, and Gorodetske, the site of the missions new administrative headquarters. Pastor David J. Miller's family is planning to return home in 2011, and a replacement couple is sought. Donations are also needed to pay back outstanding interest-free loans on the building projects in Gorodetske. Youth volunteers for the

annual Seed Team distribution project are welcome. The New Order Amish organization Iron Curtain Ministries annually donates tillers and chain saws, which are assembled, distributed and maintained by MIM staff. The need continues for doctrinally sound Christian literature for Ukraine. A Russian translation of *Doctrines of the Bible* is almost ready to be printed. MIM also distributes CAM's Russian edition of *Seed of Truth* family magazine. Every July MIM conducts a summer Bible camp for children, an effective method of ministry through children of unchristian parents, as well as encouraging believers.

**4:50-5:00pm: C.A.M. Billboards program—Johnny Miller**

There are presently 109 billboards around the United States with 3.2 million motorists passing by each day. Billboards have a variety of messages, with a toll-free number that people can call. Tele-counselors from our churches receive an average of 40 calls per 24 hour period. They counsel the callers and send out literature for various needs, including pocket sermons from *Beside the Still Waters*. Several stories were shared about calls taken. A delegation recently visited Utah to follow up on the many interested call from this predominantly Mormon area. This has led to an opportunity for church planting in Utah, if there are interested congregations. Applications to become a CAM tele-counselor are available at the CAM booth.

**5:50pm: Moderator & Bishop Committee Part II—Daniel Lapp**

The bishop committee is seeking affirmation as to whether or not they should proceed with the proposal from the Bishop Committee Statement, "That there be a mission statement drawn up..." In a floor vote, many raised their hands in affirmation, none objected.

**5:02pm: Amish Mennonite Historical Association—Paul A. Miller**

A proposal of purpose, goals, objectives, and structure for an historical association was distributed. Paul and Cory Anderson are proposing that an association collect records and archive them in a central location so that they can then in turn be made available to other interested parties. The what—this proposal. The who—those with an avid interest in history, not necessarily the ordained. Approval is sought of the ministerial body to appoint an ad hoc organizational committee to establish a board. The committee would include Aaron Lapp Jr., Jonas J.E. Miller, and Tim Miller. "We're merely ratifying their organizational effort to preserve the records that this body has rendered in the past, and making them accessible to those interested in such things." In a floor vote, many raised their hands in approval, none objected.

**THURSDAY, APRIL 7, 2011**

**10:11-10:15am: Ministers' Meeting Coordination—Paul A. Miller**

Next year, the Beachy congregations of Plain City, OH, have extended an invitation for April 3, 4, and 5, 2012. As constituency membership increases, it takes larger facilities and more work to host the ministers meetings, an increasing burden for smaller and single-church communities. Therefore, the larger more populous communities of Lancaster County, PA, Holmes County, OH, and Northern Indiana will host the meetings twice for every one time that smaller communities host. Larger communities are encouraged to solicit help from outlying churches. Congregations not in the present rotation are invited to volunteer to host the meetings if possible. Business session minutes will automatically be emailed to all ministers who have email addresses in their

registration. Hard copies will be mailed to those who sign up on a sign-up sheet at the registration table. The last page of minutes will include lists of committee and board members, to provide one place to turn for this information.

**11:37-11:59am: Calvary Bible School—Paul A. Miller**

Tim Stoltzfus' term as a board member is expiring, and he has declined to stand for reelection. CBS currently has five board members, who are elected based on regions that follow the youth fellowship meeting districts. A representative is sought from the southeast district. The board of CBS presents the following slate of nominees, to be voted on by ballot:

- ✓ Wendell Hochstetler, Cold Spring M., Abbeville, SC
- Anthony Miller, Dayspring C.F., Taylorsville, NC
- Duane Weaver, Pilgrim C.F., Stuarts Draft, VA

The CBS board is forming several subcommittees that need to be staffed, including a building and an IT committee. This ministerial body has previously approved that up to one non-ordained brother may serve as a board member. However, because laymen are less known amongst the ministerial body, it is now apparent that it is unlikely that they will be elected. Therefore the CBS board seeks approval from the ministers present to appoint one or two laymen as needed to serve as board and subcommittee members.

*Financial Report, Tim Stoltzfus:* \$12,491 remained at the closing of the winter terms last year. Receipts: \$171,265; expenses: \$163,491; balance: \$20,265. We are \$800 ahead of last year's balance. Donations from churches totaled \$54,800, almost matching Bible school tuition.

*Principal's Report, Floyd Stoltzfus:* Thanks were extended to ministers who reviewed the handbook with students from their congregations prior to their attendance. A review of activity this year was given, highlighting the singing, student sharing and confessions, and studies on personal purity. There were a few maintenance problems, but many fewer than recent years. This year, 97 students were enrolled for term one, 104 for term two, and 44 for term three. They came from 21 states, Ontario, Kenya, El Salvador, and Australia. The term three attendance was lower than usual.

*Miscellaneous, Paul A. Miller:* CBS desires to find more teachers; suggestions from the ministers are sought. The facilities need to be "right-sized" to match staff accommodation with student capacity, especially for younger teachers come with their families. Board member Norman Kauffman has been appointed chairman of the building committee which will be formed, and will make a proposal at a later meeting. In 2010 CBS sponsored the Young Men's Discipleship Course led by Ernest Eby, where six to 12 young men spend a week to ten days in spiritually and physically rigorous activities, which will be conducted again in 2011. Food donations are needed for the CBS pantry. A floor vote was taken regarding the appointment of one or two laymen to the existing five-man CBS board; approval was given by a raise of hands, none objected.

**11:59am:-12:06pm: Youth Fellowship Meetings—Luke Stutzman**

Simon Bender's term has expired; he has declined nomination. The following nominees were voted on by ballot:

- ✓ Jason Smoker, Mine Road A.M., Lancaster County, PA
- George Stoltzfus, Shekinah C.F., Middleburg, PA

Last year, there was a good report and good attendance. This year's meetings will be held at:

Northeast	Shekinah C.F., Middleburg, PA
Northwest	Pleasant View A.M., Arthur, IL
Southeast	Clearview M., Montezuma, GA
Southwest	Calvary C.F., Paris, TN
North central	Canaan F., Plain City, OH

The committee proposed shifting western Kentucky and southern Indiana out of the southwest district and into closer districts. No action was taken, but input was invited.

**1:46-2:07pm: Peace and Service Committee—Elmer Miller**

Tim Miller's term has expired; he is available for re-election.

✓ Tim Miller, Oak Grove M., Aroda, VA

Steve Swartzentruber, Cold Spring M., Abbeville, SC

A paper describing CASP activity was distributed. CASP feels it has not done well enough informing the constituency about CASP activities. CASP is short \$1,500 from the last project. Contributions are welcome. The committee may need to be enlarged soon, but no action was taken. Hutchinson, KS, has been the location of recent CASP projects. Interfaith Housing Service has been pleased with the work done by CASP teams. Selective Service (SS) endorses the CASP work. The CASP committee governing the work of the 15 constituencies pursuing projects requires no less than one project every two years. The Beachy constituency has done one project each year, first in New Orleans, then two in Hutchinson.

*Project Report, David L. Miller:* A brief history was shared about the program. One suggestion from the recent volunteers is a need for more structure, knowing what is expected of you when you come. During the recent work, two houses destined for demolition were refurbished, and they began working on a unit Interfaith Housing wants to use as headquarters; the headquarters remains unfinished. Volunteers have been difficult to recruit; churches should inform their young men and couples of the needs in early 2012 and on. In 2012, there is a desire to do two projects.

*Healthcare Reform, David Nisly:* Starting in 2014, with the passage of the new healthcare legislation, employers will have to provide "approved" healthcare or else pay a penalty, with limited exceptions. Church sharing plans under certain circumstances may qualify as valid plans, if *approved* by the IRS before December 31, 2013 as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. Plans who want to be qualified must file a Form 1023 with the IRS seeking approval. Qualified plans will require an annual independent audit, an extra cost we have not had to date. In approaching this as an Amish-Mennonite denomination, one solution may be to collaborate under one 501(c)(3) umbrella so there is only one audit, but a challenge to one of the plans under this umbrella would put all organizations at risk. Or each plan could do the \$5,000-\$10,000 audit independently, as some are already doing their audits this way. Byerly & Payne, a SC accounting firm, has provided handouts explaining this matter in greater detail, available in the back.

**2:07-2:24pm: Anabaptist Financial—Richie Lauer**

The purpose of Anabaptist Financial is to assist the Conservative Anabaptist brotherhood in channeling material resources within the Kingdom of Christ and to provide stewards with Biblically-based financial counsel consistent with conservative Anabaptists beliefs. An overview of the programs was presented.

2:24-2:37pm: **Institute for Global Opportunities—Marvin Kauffman**

An overview of the program was presented, including Beachy members involved. There was concern that the many who go to Asia will take away from involvement in Beachy missions. However, alumni come back and work in our churches and missions. In 2013, IGO is projecting a ministerial term, including two mission trips. Suggestions for new teachers are welcome

2:38-2:45pm: **Faith Builders Education Program—Ernest Hochstetler**

Faith Builders is beginning a General Studies program, equivalent to two years of college preparation, with the idea of preparing people for further college education. There is more information available on the table. FB is doing renovations and asking for donations.

2:45-3:10pm: **Amish Mennonite Aid—Earl Peachy**

Alvin Stoltzfus' term has expired. The following nominees were voted on by ballot:

- Simon Bender, Shady Grove C.F., PA
- Mark Wagler, Pleasant View A.M., OH
- ✓ Alvin Stoltzfus, Mine Road A.M., PA

*Secretary-treasurer report, Ivan Beachy:* The financial report is available. Contributions: 2.3M; expenses: 2.5M. A balance carryover from last year brought the balance to \$330,000. Presently, there is just under \$200,000 to work with. Love offerings were generous, some over \$125,000. Shares will be around \$68 a share. In the early years of AMA, minimum standards were for all workers. In 1964, the ministerial body approved those, which were mended in 1967 in Holmes County. Now, the local AMA churches have developed their own standards. Mission workers were asked by SMBI if the document is still current. Rather than revise the old, AMA suggests “archiving” it, using it as a reference in the event of a work started in another country. The Bishop Committee approved of this suggestion. Would AMA workers have no minimum standards? No. Home church guidelines are to be supported by workers, as well as voluntary service unit guidelines are to be observed. And they are to support the local church guidelines where they are serving.

*Ray Stutzman, personnel:* Related a story about an armed robbery in Scotland, Belize. Present needs: one male teacher in Cayo, a couple in Cayo also to serve in the high school, a single brother at Isabella to teach lower grades, a unit leader couple in Paraguay, a maintenance fellow in Paraguay, and various ongoing needs in Kenya. There are approximately 600 converts in Kenya, and opportunities reach beyond present finances and personnel. Needs are met in El Salvador.

*Earl Peachy:* A hand raise vote was taken for “archiving” the AMA standards. Many raised their hands in support. “Does anyone have questions?” None were given. AMA is open for suggestions in the future for board nominees. However, a slate must be prepared before arrival, according to the AMA constitution.

In **Belize**, the three Pine Ridge churches are showing greater interest and responsibility for the schools that AMA has supported. Looks like a 3-5 year phase-out plan; this demonstrates maturity. There is a deacon ordination planned for Cayo in May. In **El Salvador**, the delegation found enthusiasm. In **Paraguay**, there was an ordination earlier this year by voice of the church.

In **Kenya**, there was a recent ordination. Work in Kenya is growing. At this time last year, there were seven brothers commissioned to help with the workload (now six). In 2008, some churches were torn apart by tribal clashes, but some of those dispersed have established small groups in new settings. An email was read from Merle Beachy that demonstrated the eagerness of Kenyans. Another church in Nakuru area started this past year, and yet another church will likely be started later this year.

**5:00-5:11pm: Calvary Publications—Elmer Glick**

Glenn Yoder's term has expired; he has declined nomination. The following were voted on by ballot:

- ✓ Manferd McGrath, Dayspring C.F., Taylorsville, NC
- Duane Weaver, Pilgrim C.F., Stuarts Draft, VA
- Mark Webb, Oak Grove Mennonite, Aroda, VA

Junior Messages Editor Anita Yoder has asked for a replacement, and a lead is currently being followed. David L. Miller's position on the board is extended one year at a time by the board, rather than putting him up for election every five years. Financial balance is about the same as last year, \$19,572.55. These funds must last to the end of the year, since subscription renewals come at year end. *Calvary Messenger* is self-supporting but depends on donations to keep subscription prices low. Recent mailing problems are being worked through. Concerns may be emailed to Mark Beachy. Several books and tracts are available.

Calvary Publications has oversight of the Conservative Anabaptist School Board Institute. CASBI was held on Mar 4-5, 2011, in Daviess County, IN. Suggestions for host communities are welcome.

*Corrections and updates for next year's minutes may be submitted to Cory Anderson at 330-897-1426 28539 SR-751, Newcomerstown, OH, 43832 cory@beachyam.org*

***CORRECTION FROM THE 2010 MINUTES:***

On page four, under *General Missions Report- Daniel Bontrager*, the sentence, "The children's home started by the El Salvador churches grew..." should end with "...*New Order Amish.*" The deaf ministry, also run by the national Salvadorian churches, is entirely separate from the children's home.



Beachy Amish Mennonite Organizations: Committee and Board Members

**Amish Mennonite Aid**

Earl Peachy	Chairman
Ivan Beachy	Secretary-Treasurer
Philip Beachy	Member
Paul Beachy	Member
Alvin Stoltzfus*	Member
Ray Stutzman	Personnel

**Amish Mennonite Historical Association  
Organizational Committee**

Aaron Lapp*	Ad Hoc Chairman
Tim Miller*	Ad Hoc Member
Jonas J.E. Miller*	Ad Hoc Member
Cory Anderson*	Ad Hoc Member

*The organizational committee will have board elections, then dissolve*

**Beachy A.M. Bishop Committee**

David Yoder	Chairman
Raymond King	Secretary
Phil Miller	Member
Ivan Beachy	Member
Laban Kaffman*	Member

*Outgoing: Roman Mullet*

**Calvary Bible School**

Paul A. Miller	Chairman
Marvin Kauffman	Vice-chairman
Norman Kauffman	Secretary
Stan Nisly	Member
Wendell Hochstetler*	Member

*Outgoing: Tim Stoltzfus*

*The CBS board may appoint 1-2 laymen*

**Calvary Publications**

Elmer Glick	Chairman
Nathan Yoder	Vice-chairman
Enos Stutzman	Secretary
David L. Miller	Member
Ralph Miller	Member
Manferd McGrath*	Member
Paul L. Miller	Editor
Mark Beachy	Treasurer-Circulation

*Outgoing: Glenn Yoder*

**Ministers' Meeting Coordinator**

Paul A. Miller

**Missions Interest Committee**

Lorne Keupfer	Chairman
Marvin Weirich	Secretary-Treasurer
Mel Glick	Board Member
Rodger Byers	Board Member
John D. Hostetler	Board Member

**Peace & Service Committee**

Elmer Miller	Chairman
Merv Lapp	Member
Tim Miller*	Member
David S. King	Emeritus
David L. Miller	Emeritus

**Penn Valley Christian Retreat**

Alvin Beachy	Chairman
Paul R. Miller	Vice-chairman
Paul Beachy	Secretary-Treasurer
Andy Hostetler	Member
Mel Stoltzfus	Member
Loren Yoder	Member
Paul Sommers	Member
Elmer Schrock	Ministerial Board
David S. King	Ministerial Board
Homer Zook	Ministerial Board
Leon Overholt	Administrator

*Election to occur in June 2011*

**Youth Fellowship Meetings**

Luke Stutzman	Chairman
Verlynn Yoder	Member
Wayne Nisly	Member
Dan Byler	Member
Jason Smoker*	Member

*Outgoing: Simon Bender*

\*Newly elected or re-elected member

Bishop Committee Report  
April 6, 2011

We thank you for your continued support involvement and patience in the effort of unifying the constituent body of ministers and churches around biblically based values and norms. These discussions are aimed at addressing misgivings about the current state of affairs in our constituency. We live in a society that is buffeted by winds of change that are driven in large measure by the prince of the power of the air. While he continues his relentless effort at destroying us from within and without, our Lord equips us to withstand his onslaught and give the grace to be victorious. We believe it is important that we make an honest attempt at addressing our current needs in ways that continue to build on the foundation that is laid, Jesus Christ. He, the Lord of the church years to be Lord of every life under our shepherding. He has also commissioned us, who know Him as both Savior and Lord, to bring others to himself through our witness. While we cannot dictate in detail to future generations just how to respond to the pressures of their time, it is our responsibility as servant leaders to make every effort to build in such a way that aids them in fulfilling the above stated objectives.

Over the past year we have had numerous opportunities to interact with some of you, both informally and at the bishops' meeting last December. It is our belief that the desire to meet the needs of our people and to reach out to others is universal among us. Just how we best accomplish the task is where we find growing differences. To all of us it seems apparent that to fulfill the objective of nurturing souls under our care some defined boundaries are important. Some feel we have over emphasized parameters at the expense of reaching others with the gospel of peace. When it comes to our witness, we urge caution in overrating the value or the obstacle that our separated lifestyle is in winning souls for the Kingdom. Both perspectives can have a flawed focus. We need to focus on the redemptive power of the cross that calls us to a radical change of heart that affects the way we live and the things we do.

The results of last year's survey indicate significant support, that as a constituency, we define minimums that represent a consensus of the ideals we hold to as a brotherhood of churches. The reason for defining minimums stems from concerns that the differences among us will lead us to a spiritual coldness and make it increasingly difficult to work together on a variety of fronts. These include our group effort in missions, Calvary Bible School, and providing service opportunities for young people. Could following through with such an effort be carried out effectively with our current model of congregational autonomy or should we consider moving toward a more structured model of organization? Up to now, participation has been voluntary and based on each congregation's perception of what defines reasonable commonality and allowable parameters in relation to the rest of constituency churches.

With the continuing formation of the Beachy constituency in the late 50's and early 60's, constituent churches united around what seemed to be similar goals and values. Many of the goals and values were understood or assumed but very little was formally documented. For a short time compliance to a certain set of standards was a prerequisite for becoming a "members church", but enforcing that criteria has been abandoned. By now it is unclear what all was included in those conditions. We continue to see value in maintaining an appropriate affinity among us that enhances our ability to relate to each other.

As we look at the prospect of formalizing parameters that define who we are, several questions emerge.

How much of our belief and practice should this definition include? Who primarily would it serve? Should it be a written statement that is ratified by the ministers of the constituency, or should we continue with oral commitments based on mutual understanding of what is accepted? The latter option would be the simplest in many ways. The question remains, would this approach help us meet the objectives we are reaching for and provide appropriately for the future of the constituency? Would it be wise to combine the two ideas? Documenting the non-negotiables such as the doctrinal positions we hold, and allowing our commitment to the constituency on practical applications to be a matter of sensitivity to brotherhood consensus?

To relate to each other based on our assumption of doctrinal understanding has, for the most part, served us well, but has the time come to document a mission statement that represents our understanding of scripture and its out working in our lives?

In last year's survey the one practical item that was mentioned as a possible defining issue for us in the past was the non-use of the radio among us. A large majority of the respondents concurred with that understanding. We assume that those respondents still make that a practical application in their congregation and see that as a valid safeguard. While not all conservative Anabaptist groups have adopted this application, we believe there is significantly more to be gained by its non-use than its use. Let's be honest and recognize that depending on how we use the Internet our position on radio use is inconsistent. We appeal to your sensitivity to other churches in the constituency in this matter as you guide your congregations in their choices.

Given the above we propose the following:

1. That there be a mission statement drawn up that represents our understanding of biblical matters that don't change. We envision this committee overseeing such a document but drawing from the strengths of other ordained brothers to help provide breadth and detail.
2. That at the meeting planned for bishops Dec. 6<sup>th</sup> of this year one of the topics for discussion would be the question of structure for our constituency. Any consensus for the direction we move on the matter would be presented at the ministers meeting in 2012. We see this as an issue that needs input and consideration from the entire ministerial body.
3. That we continue to cultivate respect for the sensitivities of sister churches. One way to show deference to the body could be to forego voting on constituency issues if the practice in our church is at variance from the rest of the constituency.

The Beachy constituency has been characterized over the years by good will toward others who have a differing point of view and even practice. How best to maintain that spirit and be faithful to our own conscience is an ideal we all reach for. One of the ways to best accomplish that is through honest and open dialog. While communication doesn't necessarily resolve all our differences it does help to minimize misgivings and can help us face honestly our own biases and conclusions. God does bless any sincere effort on our part at following hard after a relationship with Him and our brother.

The Bishop Committee