

CLC REPORT

The Constituency Leaders Council, made up of conference ministers, conference moderators and an additional delegate from each conference, met in Hesston, Kansas, Oct. 17-19. Ralph Reinford, Jessica Schrock-Ringenberg and I represented the Ohio Conference. For me, it was another of those experiences that make you wonder how in the world you ever got put in a place like this. But like many life experiences, such as parenting, you go in totally unprepared, but hopefully grow into the role. I just have to trust God that will happen here.

We learned that the role of the Mennonite Church USA body is a work in progress. We were challenged to accept our role as elders to the denomination. We listened to and discussed the executive director's report. They have paid off the mortgage on their office building six months ahead of schedule. Ervin Stutzman was grateful for the renewed focus on being missional and church planting that is becoming evident in several of the conferences.

The peer review group and the Central District Conference filled us in on how they experienced the peer review process. We then discussed ways that this process could be reworked to make it a viable tool in the denomination.

Nancy Kauffman and Terry Shue are continuing to work at leadership development. We discussed what was supposed to be the final revision for the Ministerial Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure. I think the final result of our discussion was that it still needed some final tweaking.

The denominational moderator, David Boshart, identified several younger members of the CLC and asked them to relay to us what their dreams were for the conference. They had a very inspiring presentation encouraging us to quit spending so much time and energy on things about which we disagree and to focus instead on our mission statement: **God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy, and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world.**

We heard from Willard Metzger, executive director from MC Canada. He talked to us about recent development and struggles in their branch of the Mennonite Church.

We spent time in a video conference with a church plant in Illinois that is working with refugee groups and heard a report from Kansas dealing with becoming missionaries where we live, work, and play.

We were informed of the upcoming convention in Orlando, Florida in July 2017. Watch for information in the upcoming newsletters and media articles regarding the new format for next year's meeting.

CLC will meet next in Elkhart, Indiana on March 16–18, 2017.

It was a helpful learning experience for me just networking with other conferences and learning how they were dealing with many of the same issues we are. Maybe the phrase we use to describe this phenomenon is "misery loves company." Overall, I came away with the idea that there is hope and a future for the denomination.