

Minutes of the 40th Annual Conference Assembly (ACA)
Ohio Conference of Mennonite Church USA
Central Christian School
March 13-14, 2009

Theme – The Missional Church: Mennos on the Town

Friday, March 13, 6 p.m. — Business Session #1

- A1. **Welcome.** John Rohrer, moderator, welcomed delegates to the 40th Annual Conference Assembly of Ohio Conference of Mennonite Church USA.
- A2. **Opening Song.** Bill Seymour, pastor of Orrville Mennonite Church, led the delegates in an opening song, “I sing the mighty power of God.”
- A3. **Invocation.** Conference Minister Tom Kauffman led delegates in an opening prayer.
- A4. **Opening Moderator Comments.** John Rohrer, moderator, commented about last year’s ACA in Bluffton, and reflected on the snowstorm last year and being snowed in at the Bluffton Comfort Inn. He acknowledged the planning committee for ACA: Henry Beun, Shirley Hochstetler, Tom Kauffman, Judy King, Mattie Marie Mast, Bill Seymour and Sara Weaver. John mentioned the shortened schedule this year and asked for feedback on this different format for planning in coming years. He encouraged delegates to stay for the communion and commissioning service on Saturday.

John also made several remarks about how business sessions will be conducted. We will use modified Robert’s Rules of Order. He assured the delegates that his goal is to discern the will of the majority. There is no Listening Committee this year. Instead, posters are available for delegate feedback. Delegates may use them at any time. John also introduced the Resolutions Committee, which consists of Ginny Cress, Carl Wiebe and Larry Augsburg. Any proposed resolutions should be given to them by noon on Saturday.

- A5. **Roll Call.** The roll call of congregations was done via a PowerPoint presentation with slides showing the church building and the pastor or pastors of each congregation.
- A6. **Minutes of the 2008 ACA.** John Rohrer drew the delegates’ attention to the minutes of the 2008 Annual Conference Assembly held at Bluffton University. He highlighted one of the amendments to the Ohio Conference Constitution which was approved at the 2008 ACA: “Article VI: C. 8 – One delegate from each congregation shall be designated as a communications liaison between the Conference and the congregation. That delegate will be asked to take the lead in reporting Conference activity to the congregation.” John encouraged all congregations to make sure that they have chosen a delegate to serve as communications liaison.
- A7. **Gifts Discernment Ballot.** Bruce Glick, chair of the Gifts Discernment Ministry, presented the slate of nominees for 2009-10. He asked those who are on the slate to stand up so delegates could see them. He reported that the group had a good response to their requests for nominees. The Gifts Discernment Ministry still has one vacancy to fill on the Ministry Development Team. They would like to get someone from the Northwest Ohio area.
- A8. **Welcome of New Pastors.** Tom and the regional pastors welcomed and introduced pastors new to the Conference and those in new assignments:
Patrick Helmuth — Bethel (Rittman)
Dave Maurer — Bethel (West Liberty)
Kevin and Nan Kanagy — Friendship
Ross Miller — Hartville
Tony Doehrmann — Jubilee
Craig Strasbaugh — Martins (youth pastor)
James Ng — New Mercies
Glenn Steiner — North Clinton (interim pastor)
Ann Nofziger — Southside (interim pastor)
Ron Kauffman — Tedrow (interim pastor)
Cheryl Vanatsky — Maple Grove (beginning in April)
Bob Schloneger — Walnut Creek (interim pastor)
Jim Roynon — Gilead (interim pastor)

Glenn Rader — Pike

Tom Kauffman led the delegates in a time of prayer for these pastors.

- A9. **Proposed Constitutional Amendments.** John Rohrer presented three proposed constitutional amendments. He noted that the amendments would go into effect immediately if passed. Delegates will vote on each amendment separately. Delegates talked about the proposed amendments in their table groups.

It was moved and seconded that the Ohio Conference Constitution be amended to include the following amendment:

“Article IV: Membership 3. The Leadership Team will recommend that the delegates to Conference Assembly receive the congregation as a member of the Conference. The congregation will be received upon a 75 percent delegate vote of affirmation.”

This motion passed unanimously.

Regarding the second amendment, a question was raised about why the financial coordinator is a non-voting member of Leadership Team. John Rohrer explained that the Transition Team, which originally worked on the Constitution, did not want the Leadership Team to include a lot of staff members who are voting members. Conference Minister Tom Kauffman is a voting member on the Leadership Team, but the administrative secretary also is a non-voting member.

It was moved and seconded that the Ohio Conference Constitution be amended to include the following amendment:

“Article XI: Staff Persons F. Financial Coordinator. The financial coordinator is responsible for the financial record-keeping of the Conference and is in charge of depositing funds received, paying bills and preparing the payroll. The financial coordinator is a member of the Stewardship Ministry and assists that group in the development of the yearly spending plan. The financial coordinator also serves as a non-voting member of the Leadership Team.”

This motion passed unanimously.

A third proposed amendment originally read as follows:

“Article XIV: Suspension of the Constitution. The provisions of this constitution may be suspended temporarily by an affirmative vote of 90 percent of the delegates present at any duly called business meeting of Ohio Conference.”

It was moved and seconded to amend the amendment to read “any provision” instead of “the provisions.” This amendment passed.

In addition, it was moved and seconded to amend the amendment to read “suspended temporarily to expire at the conclusion of the present meeting” instead of “suspended temporarily.” This amendment passed.

Following the approval of these changes, the delegates considered the third constitutional amendment, which read as follows:

“Article XIV: Suspension of the Constitution. Any provision of this constitution may be suspended temporarily to expire at the conclusion of the present meeting by an affirmative vote of 90 percent of the delegates present at any duly called business meeting of Ohio Conference.”

This amendment was approved by the delegates.

- A10. **Grant Writer.** June Phelps has worked as grant writer for Ohio Conference since 2007. She has resigned as grant writer; her resignation will take effect after finishing one more grant. John thanked June for her work for Ohio Conference. June spoke about her work with the Conference and thanked the delegates.
- A11. **Resource Team Coordinator.** John introduced Sherah-Leigh Gerber, who will be working with resource teams beginning April 1. She is being hired for a one-year period and will work 19 hours per week. Sherah-Leigh will receive her Master of Divinity degree from Eastern Mennonite Seminary in April after completing

online coursework. John noted that Sherah-Leigh's salary will come from the Capacity Building Fund, not the spending plan.

- A12. **Prayer Ministry Team.** Mattie Marie Mast spoke about the Prayer Ministry Team. Prayer has been a large part of the planning for ACA. She mentioned the prayer room which is available during ACA. Season of Prayer will take place tomorrow morning in the orchestra room. Volunteers have committed to pray throughout ACA. Baskets for prayer requests are available. A prayer booth is in the display area, and at that booth delegates can sign up to receive the *Prayer Prompter* newsletter.
- A13. **Worship Session # 1.** The Assembly met in Central Christian's Performing Arts Center for worship. Henry Beun, head administrator of Central Christian School, was worship leader. Music was led by Nathan Gundy, faculty member at Central Christian, and the Varsity Singers of Central Christian provided special music. Keynote speaker Jim Amstutz, co-pastor of Akron Mennonite Church in Akron, Pa., spoke on the theme "Hidden in Plain Sight: Bold Witness as Local Theology."

Saturday, March 14 — 8:30 a.m. Business Session #2

- A14. **Opening Hymn.** Bill Seymour led the delegates in singing "Holy, Holy, Holy."
- A15. **Delegates Welcomed.** Moderator John Rohrer welcomed young adult delegates and new delegates.
- A16. **Central Christian School.** Henry Beun, head administrator of Central Christian School (CCS), spoke to delegates, giving thanks to the CCS staff for all their work in making Annual Conference Assembly possible at Central this year. He thanked God for the CCS staff and welcomed the delegates to campus. He also thanked members of area churches who helped in hosting delegates. He reported on the choir students who participated in district contest. He thanked the three members of the committee who completed the theological review of CCS, Norma Duerksen, Rachel Kauffman and Jim Mullett, and made a few comments about the review.

Henry reminded delegates that according to CCS bylaws, the school is owned by Ohio Conference. In the past year, Ohio Conference has given \$30,000 to Central's tuition assistance program, which is 10 percent of the tuition assistance program. Central will miss the financial support of Ohio Conference, which is slated to be discontinued at the end of the 2008-2009 fiscal year due to falling revenues. The potential of the Capacity Building Fund to raise funds for Central and other causes has not been fulfilled. As Central plans for the upcoming school year, there will be no tuition increase in 2009-10. He also reported that Central will offer a \$500 discount to each student from churches in the partnership program. He said that PreK-12 education is crucial to the health of the Mennonite Church.

Henry offered the CCS corporation membership list for approval by the delegates. He thanked Tom Kauffman and John Rohrer for their dialogue with Central Christian and their support in strengthening the relationship between the Conference and the school.

The following motion was made and seconded: We approve the Central Christian School corporation list. Motion approved.

- A17. **Fraternal Guests.** Tom Kauffman introduced fraternal guests who are attending ACA: Rebecca Fullmer, Terri McGarry and Denise Warnecke of Adriel, Paul J. Miller of the Amish and Mennonite Heritage Center, Ron Ringenberg of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Paul Leichty of Anabaptist Disabilities Network, Jeff Boehr of Bluffton University, Deb Horst of Camp Luz, Bruce Kooker of Central Christian School, Lisa Barnett of Center for Restorative Justice, Jan Sohar of Choice Books of Ohio, Paul Neufeld Weaver of Christian Peacemaker Teams, Don Yoder and Karen Moshier Shenk of Eastern Mennonite University and Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Adam Roth of Goshen College, LeRoy Mast of Menno-Hof, Bill Ressler of MCC Connections, Marlin Yoder of MCC Great Lakes, Jess Hamman of MCC Meat Canning, Rachel Swartzendruber Miller of Mennonite Church USA, Bruce Kindy of Mennonite Disaster Service, Tim Burkholder of Mennonite Education Agency, Lyle Troyer of Mennonite Men, Bethany Shue Nussbaum and Stanley Green of Mennonite Mission Network, Lois Bontrager and Jim Frado of Mennonite Mutual Aid, Levi Miller and Norma Duerksen of Mennonite Publishing Network, Jean Emery of Ohio Mennonite Women and Allen Rutter of Shalom Wellness & Mediation Center.
- A18. **Remembering Pastors Who Have Died.** Tom Kauffman also noted the Ohio Conference pastors who have died in the past year: Ron Blough, Charles Kalous, Earl Stuckey, Phil Clemens and Marvin Hostetler. He led the delegates in a prayer of thanks for these pastors.

- A19. **Moderator's Report.** John R. gave a moderator's report, focusing on the work of the Leadership Team. He reminded delegates that several years ago he gave an imaginary 2009 report in which he predicted what kinds of things Ohio Conference would be doing by now. He noted that we have made a lot of progress in forming resource teams and including more displays and poster sessions at ACA. He noted that the Conference has stabilized its financial situation, but that stability has come with some costs. He noted that we are still looking for leadership for the Capacity Building Team and asked delegates for counsel in this area. He also noted the number of grants which the Conference has received. He referred to his report in the annual report book (pages 41-43). John also emphasized the importance of cluster meetings and noted that while final action takes place at ACA, much work goes on at the cluster meetings, and things change based on clusters.
- A20. **Assistant Moderator's Report.** Assistant Moderator LaVonne Hartman reported on the work of Ministry Development Team, reviewing the functions of the team. She reminded delegates that forms for developing a resource team are available online, and she invited people to give suggestions. She also reminded delegates that Sherah-Leigh Gerber will be working with resource teams. LaVonne also introduced the representatives of several resource teams and their reports follow.
- A21. **E³ Youth Leader Training.** Joe Troyer, youth pastor of Hartville Mennonite Church, explained the beginning of E³, a three-year program for training youth workers. He gave information about the upcoming event on Sept. 19 at Central Christian with Walt Mueller. He encouraged people to attend. He thanked Ohio Conference for support of E³.
- A22. **Alternatives to Military Recruiting.** Tom Kauffman reported on efforts to provide alternatives to military recruitment. A packet of information is to be distributed to guidance counselors in Ohio high schools so that they can give this information to the students they counsel. The Conference applied for two different grants for funding of this program. Neither of the grants was fully funded. The team would also like to give this information to each of our congregations. Display copies are available on the registration table. This resource team is open to having additional members join. Those interested should contact Tom.
- A23. **Reduce Poverty Resource Team.** Crandall Miller, a member of the Reduce Poverty Resource Team, introduced other members of the team, which include Nathan Beachy, Rochelle Beachy, Dan Hooley, Joel Miller, Funmi Olarewaju, Bill Speight and Karen Speight. He thanked the Conference leadership for help with distribution of information and for meeting with the team. Crandall talked about a three-day conference in Cleveland. This conference is an example of working with other faith-based groups. The resource team has created four written process documents. These documents are a starting point. The team is not saying that they have all the answers. They are looking for others' success stories and want to learn best practices and share them. The team would like each congregation to identify one or two persons who can focus on this area.
- A24. **Pastor-Spouse Retreat.** Bill Seymour, pastor of Orrville Mennonite Church, talked about the effort to plan a Pastor-Spouse Retreat. Proposed date of this retreat is Nov. 6-8. They are hoping for 30 pastor-spouse couples. Bill emphasized that this is **not** a training retreat and not a marriage retreat, but rather a space for relaxing and healing.
- A25. **Testimony in Worship.** Dick Barrett, pastor of Oak Grove Mennonite Church in West Liberty, spoke about the Revitalizing Testimony in Worship project. The Oak Grove congregation was interested in learning how to deal with announcements and sharing time in the worship service. The Revitalizing Testimony in Worship seminar, which was held in November, was very informative. After the seminar, they made slight changes in the way that they conducted sharing time (now called "testimony time") in the worship service, and there were dramatic results. They encourage the focus to be on God by using the prompt, "How has God been working in your life this week?" People have shared significant concerns and struggles. He affirmed that God is working in our midst.
- A26. **Sculpture Unveiled.** Tom Kauffman and LaVonne Hartman unveiled the sculpture commissioned for the Revitalizing Testimony in Worship project. This bronze sculpture was created by artist Esther Augsburg. Individual congregations can host it for several weeks at a time. If individual congregations want their own copy of the sculpture, they can talk with Tom about making arrangements with the artist.
- A27. **Musical Composition Introduced.** Christine Nafziger, co-pastor of Millersburg Mennonite Church, was commissioned to write a song for the Revitalizing Testimony in Worship project. She said it was the first time she had been commissioned to write a piece of music. Usually she writes about something that she is experiencing. The song is titled "We Will Stand." A trio performed the song for delegates, with Christine

Nafziger playing the piano, Toby Hazlett of Millersburg Mennonite Church singing and Patrick Nafziger, co-pastor of Millersburg Mennonite Church, playing the drum. This composition will be made available to Ohio Conference congregations, possibly from the Ohio Conference Web site.

- A28. **Introduction of Corinthian Plan.** Steve Garboden spoke about the Corinthian Plan, a proposed plan to provide basic health insurance for all eligible pastors. The name of the plan comes from II Corinthians 8 and 9, a text in which Paul appeals to the Corinthian church to support their fellow believers in the church in Jerusalem. The people working on this plan estimate that about 80 to 90 pastors in the denomination are currently without health insurance. The plan does include churchwide agencies. The plan does have options for lower deductibles.

Each congregation will have an “ambassador” to help them understand the Corinthian Plan and to help them get their questions about the plan answered. Dave Lehman explained the role of the ambassadors. They have been trained to answer most questions about the plan and will help make contact with Mennonite Mutual Aid for further questions. Several ambassadors have been assigned to congregations in Ohio Conference. They are Dave Lehman, Lloyd Miller, Robin Miller, Kurt Horst, Stan Helmuth, Art Newcomer, Dean Beck and Steve Garboden.

- A29. **Gifts Discernment Ballot.** John instructed delegates to mark their ballots presented by the Gifts Discernment Ministry and turn the ballots in while leaving for their break.

Saturday, March 14 — 10:45 a.m. Business Session #3

- A30. **Opening Hymn.** Jim Roynon led the delegates in singing “Precious Lord, Take My Hand.”
- A31. **Conference Resource Advocate.** Norma Duerksen, Ohio Conference Resource Advocate, spoke to delegates about the Resource Advocate program. She is trying to keep Ohio Conference churches informed about churchwide resources. Congregations are encouraged to call her if they need training to work with these resources. They may also call her to get a display for their congregations. Norma will be checking with congregations to find out names of librarians and Christian education chairs. She also introduced Mennonite Publishing Network’s Bible school material for summer 2009, which is titled *Catch the Spirit*. She also called delegates’ attention to the Lenten calendar in *Beyond Ourselves*, a publication of Mennonite Mission Network. Norma also noted that she would like to gather retreat ideas.
- A32. **National Identity.** Terry Shue, pastor of Kidron Mennonite Church and a member of the Mennonite Church USA Executive Committee, talked to the delegates about the issue of national identity. Work on this issue was prompted by a resolution passed by delegates at the national convention in San Jose in 2007. We are a diverse group of people asking questions such as, “Who are we?” and “Why do we exist?” For the last 18 months a task force has been working on this issue. Instead of defining the denomination in terms of a legalistic set of rules, the task force has been adopting a more winsome, positive approach, seeing Jesus as a “magnet” which pulls us together. The task force has put together a special issue of *The Mennonite*, the Feb. 3rd issue, which focuses on this issue. There are other resources online at the Mennonite Church USA Web site.
- A33. **Congregations Seeking to Join Ohio Conference.** Two congregations are requesting membership in the Ohio Conference. John Rohrer reminded delegates that information about these congregations had been sent to delegates prior to ACA. In addition, delegates received a summary of the process which First Mennonite Church in Berne, Ind., followed as the congregation decided to leave the Central District Conference.

Both congregations have gone through the process outlined by both Mennonite Church USA and Ohio Conference to request membership in Ohio Conference. In both cases, members have voted in their congregations to join Ohio Conference. The Leadership Team has recommended that both be approved for joining Ohio Conference.

The pastor and several members of Chestnut Ridge Mennonite Church in Orrville came before the delegate body. Marvin Zuercher, pastor, spoke to delegates about the process of deciding to join Ohio Conference. Historic ties with the Virginia Conference were not as strong as they had once been. The congregation has already been associating with Ohio Conference congregations for a number of years. He said that Chestnut Ridge carefully considered this action and sensed the peace of the Lord.

Owen Burkholder, conference minister for the Virginia Conference, spoke of those from Virginia who gave

oversight to Chestnut Ridge and brought greetings from the Virginia Conference. Owen gave Tom Kauffman a candlestick representing the Chestnut Ridge congregation.

Conference Minister Tom Kauffman welcomed Marvin Zuercher and the congregation into the conference.

Representatives from First Mennonite Church in Berne came forward to speak to the delegates. Jerry Flueckiger, interim pastor, spoke and gave a brief history of First Mennonite Church. He noted that the congregation has followed the denomination's procedures to end the relationship with Central District Conference. He said that Central District Conference has been gracious in this process. The congregation wants to remain in Mennonite Church USA. He said that First Mennonite comes wanting to join with the Ohio Conference. The congregation is expecting unity, not uniformity. "Our hope is to grow in understanding together," he said.

John Rohrer read statements from the Leadership Team regarding First Mennonite's application to join the Ohio Conference, responding to some questions which he had received from delegates. The Conference did not approach First Mennonite to join. The decision to leave Central District had been made already. The congregation is in search for lead pastor and wants help from the Conference in this process. First Mennonite comes from a long Anabaptist tradition. Some congregations have taken longer to decide to change conference affiliation, but that was not Ohio Conference's demand.

Delegates discussed the application of congregations for membership in their table groups.

Chestnut Ridge Mennonite. A motion was made to accept Chestnut Ridge as a member of the Ohio Conference. Motion carried.

First Mennonite Church (Berne, Ind.) A motion was made to accept First Mennonite Church of Berne, Ind., as a member of the Ohio Conference.

Before voting on this motion, John Rohrer gave delegates an opportunity to make comments and ask questions about First Mennonite's request to join the Ohio Conference.

Ken Sims of Sharon Mennonite asked if the Ohio Conference would be conservative enough to suit First Mennonite.

Dave Maurer of Bethel Mennonite Church (West Liberty) expressed affirmation for First Mennonite. He has prior experience with First Mennonite since in the past he was a pastor of a church in the Central District Conference. He suggested that Ohio Conference and First Mennonite need to continue to work at the relationship with Central District Conference.

One delegate had a procedural question: Are members of First Mennonite Church already voting delegates? John Rohrer said that they were not voting delegates prior to the congregation becoming a member of the Conference.

Before voting, delegates paused for prayer led by Tom Kauffman.

The motion to accept First Mennonite Church of Berne, Ind., as a member of Ohio Conference was approved.

Saturday, March 14 — 2:20 p.m. Business Session #4

A34. **Opening Hymn.** Jim Roynon led delegates in singing "Be Thou My Vision."

A35. **Announcements.** John Rohrer reported that 221 delegates turned in affirmation ballots. All ballots were positive. He also reported that the offering taken on Friday night totaled \$7,395. He reminded delegates that they should put comments on the posters at the sides of the room.

A36. **Spending Plan.** Ova Helton, chair of the Stewardship Ministry, presented the proposed spending plan for 2009-2010. He noted that in the past, interest earned on capital funds has been used for grants, but that will not happen this year because of minimal earnings. Congregational giving is projected at \$450,000.

Delegates discussed the proposed spending plan in their table groups.

**The following motion was made and seconded:
We approve the 2009-10 Ohio Conference spending plan. Motion carried.**

- A37. **Mennonite Church USA.** Rachel Swartzendruber Miller of Mennonite Church USA reported to delegates. She gave thanks to those who have been helping with plans for the national convention in Columbus this summer.
- A38. **Mennonite Education Agency.** Tim Burkholder from Mennonite Education Agency brought greetings from director Carlos Romero. The agency is actively involved in passing on the faith to the next generation.
- A39. **Mennonite Publishing Network.** Levi Miller of Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN) brought greetings from MPN CEO Ron Rempel. He noted that a member from Ohio Conference, Phil Bontrager, is chair of the MPN board. He thanked delegates for their support of MPN and its curriculum.
- A40. **Mennonite Mission Network.** Bethany Shue Nussbaum and Stanley Green of Mennonite Mission Network (MMN) spoke to delegates. They noted that a member of Ohio Conference, Mattie Marie Mast, is on the MMN Board. The MMN report is on pages 71-72 of the annual report book. They thanked delegates for their generosity of sharing with MMN. Stanley Green spoke briefly about mission work in Myanmar.
- A41. **YODA.** Dave Maurer spoke about YODA (Young Adult Delegates to Assembly). In 2002 he was involved in a conversation with denominational leaders about including more young adults in MC USA. That conversation began the YODA program. He is working as a co-planner of YODA. The program seeks to inspire young adults to become more involved with the church. The program includes mentoring of young adult delegates, orientation and other workshops. There also is a panel discussion with several Executive Board members. The program ends with a reception, which is a time for reflecting on the week. If a congregation wants to be part of the YODA program, they should contact Dave Maurer. There also is a section on the convention registration form to indicate intent to participate in YODA.
- A42. **Credentialing Ministry Statement.** Larry Augsburg, a member of the Credentialing Ministry, spoke to delegates about the challenges the Credentialing Ministry faces. Credentials are awarded and held by area conferences. In some cases, credentials can be rescinded if there is pastoral misconduct. The Credentialing Ministry is involved in ordination, licensing toward ordination (in which case a mentor is assigned) and licensing for specialized ministry. First a congregation must request to credential the pastor, then the Credentialing Ministry interviews the candidate, and they make a decision regarding licensing or ordination. The decision to approve a candidate for credentialing is made considering both the candidate's personal characteristics and theology.
- A problem the Credentialing Ministry faces is that they are interviewing candidates after they have already been called by congregations, and if the candidates do not meet the high standards that the Credentialing Ministry has established, the Credentialing Ministry members are put in a difficult situation of having to decide whether to refuse to credential the pastor. Regional pastors can help pastoral search committees from calling pastors who do not meet Credentialing Ministry standards. Speaking for the group, Larry urged congregations to involve regional pastors in the pastoral search beginning early in the process.
- A43. **Ohio Conference History Project.** Celia Lehman, editor of the Ohio Conference history project, has contacted many people for information for the Ohio Conference history project. The current projection is that the new history book will be published by next March. The Conference is looking for sponsorship of this project. Those interested in sponsoring this project should see Celia, John Rohrer or someone else on the Leadership Team.
- A44. **Central Christian Review.** Rachel Kauffman and Norma Duerksen reported on the theological review of Central Christian School. The review process began in September 2008. The review team visited campus, and also interviewed alumni, pastors, staff and former staff. The review team found that Bible classes are taught from an Anabaptist perspective. Other subject areas also can involve biblical material. The students are positive about the relationships with teachers. They noted that teachers at Central receive about 25 percent less pay than public school teachers.

John Rohrer asked delegates to discuss Ohio Conference's relationship to Central Christian. They were asked to discuss these questions: "What are the growth areas for the conference?" and "How can your church relate to Central?" After discussion in table groups, delegates were asked to write down comments to be shared with the Leadership Team.

- A45. **Mongolia Mission Partnership.** Matt Flinner, associate pastor of Martins Creek Mennonite Church, reported on the workings of the Mongolia Mission Partnership (MMP). This group of churches has worked together for more than 10 years. Groups have gone to Mongolia to meet those working in Mongolia and to build playground equipment. Pages 71-72 in the Ohio Conference annual report book tell what MMP is doing.
- A46. **Recognition of Volunteers.** John Rohrer gave thanks to two people who are ending their terms of service to the Ohio Conference and presented them with certificates of recognition. LaVonne Hartman served four years as recording secretary and most recently served for two years as assistant moderator. Dan Greaser finished a two-year term as a member of the Ministry Development Team.
- A47. **Evaluation Sheet and Nomination Form.** John Rohrer asked delegates to complete their evaluation sheets and nomination forms.
- A48. **Lighthouse.** Darin Nissley, youth pastor of First Mennonite Church in Canton, spoke to delegates about First Mennonite's Lighthouse program. In 1996 the idea of the Lighthouse was conceived. The Lighthouse has Christian education and afterschool programs, both at the local elementary school and at the church. Darin also showed a short video presentation about the Lighthouse program.
- A49. **Closing Worship and Communion.** Annual Conference Assembly concluded with a worship service led by Tom Kauffman which included communion and the commissioning of new volunteers.

Reported by Ann Leaman