

Dear SCMC Delegates,

Thank you all so much for your participation in our Annual Assembly this past weekend.

I commend you for gathering humbly. We acknowledged that the church is not ours, and the conference is not ours, they belong to Christ. You expressed your understandings and dreams, your concerns and your frustrations. And, for the most part, it was done humbly and respectfully. When there were miscommunications, it was called out and corrected. I appreciate all that immensely! Thank you.

I commend you for praying diligently. We have different styles for our personal prayer, and the style used at the assembly may have been different from what you are accustomed to. But many of you entered in, and together we diligently sought God's will as we gathered to deliberate. I appreciate all that immensely! Thank you.

I commend you for deliberating thoughtfully. I am so impressed with the sound minds that abound in our conference. So many of the things said were passionate and profound, yet they were stated in loving, caring and compassionate ways. I truly believe that the Holy Spirit was guiding tongues all across the room. And when someone else spoke, you listened, you heard, you processed, you asked clarifying questions, you dug for truth. I appreciate all that immensely! Thank you.

And **the decision was made:** South Central Mennonite Conference will continue to be a Member Conference of MCUSA.

Some are more comfortable with that decision than others. If that is you, I beg you to be in prayer for your brothers and sisters who are hurting. **No one won.**

Some are not happy with the result; they are wondering where they fit into this new reality. As they see it, the conference they love has turned it back on some of the Core Biblical Beliefs that are so important, and by extension, has turned its back on them. **No one won.**

Where do we go from here? Let us not forget that we are called to be the hands and feet of Jesus to the lost and hurting world around us. To Be Jesus: To Share His Story, To Show His Love, To Shine His Truth, To Share His Mercy, To Proclaim His Grace, and to do all that we can do to be the **People of God** that the rest of the world will recognize by our Love.

South Central Mennonite Conference will be right there with you. Our goal and our responsibility is to provide you with the support and resources you need to do all those things that God is Calling you to do. Our Regional Ministry Coaches, Howard Keim, Clarence Remple, James Wanger and Tim Sweigart, are available – give them a call. Our Network Directors, Howard and Cathy Wagler, are available – give them a call. I am available – give me a call.

In the coming months we will be processing the implications of this weekend's decisions. We have decided to remain as a member congregation of MCUSA, but at the same time, over half of us clearly stated that we are genuinely concerned with the theological trajectory of MCUSA.

What do we do with that? SCMC does NOT want you to compromise your faith or your convictions. We need to help each other **live out** our faith and our convictions in loving and compassionate ways that will let the **Light of Truth** shine to all. How will that be done? What steps need to be taken? Those are important questions that demand a response. If you have any insights or wisdom to share, please call and discuss it with us.

In the mean-time, let us not forget that Jesus said: *"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."* And He turned to us and said, **"Go and do Likewise."** Let us all be about the work of being Christ to the world that He has put us in.

God bless you all

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