

MC Sask Ministries Commission Minutes
November 16, 2017
7:00 pm
Mount Royal Mennonite Church, Saskatoon

Present: Claire Ewert Fisher, Jeanette Hanson, Eric Olfert, Elmer Regier and Val Wiebe

1. **Opening** – Val talked about her recent trip to Germany. Among many other things, She and Doyle visited the Mauthausen Concentration Camp. This was not a death camp as such, but over 60,000 people died here nonetheless. It was built on a hilltop, with a beautiful view all around, perhaps out of the cruelty of letting prisoners see what they were missing.

It was a cold, rainy, sombre day when they visited. The excellent guide personalised the situation. Drawing Val closer, he said “You are standing beside a dying person who has not eaten his/her piece of bread. Do you take the bread because you are starving? Or is that too likely to draw the attention of the guards and result in punishment?”

Val had walked out the main gate sobbing and saying to herself “I won’t be silent!”

We need to be vocal about injustice!

2. **Approval of Minutes of our 17-08-10 meeting** – The minutes were approved.
3. **Business arising** –
 - a. **Walk the talk Debrief: UNDRIP and Bill 262** (teach-in at Wildwood in October)
 - Good presentation and discussion.
 - Approximately 50 participants.
 - There is still time to ask Saskatchewan Congregations to respond to this.
 - **Claire** will ask Steve Heinrichs to draft a letter to be sent to our congregations with some postcards to send to Ottawa. (last minute word from Steve that the Canadian government will support Bill 262!)
 - b. **Walking the path updates:**
 - i. **Mennonite/Muskeg Lake Music Event Debrief:**
 - It was excellent! Weather was great, attendance was good, music and dancing was varied and good, food was great and spirit was fantastic.
 - Estimated 70-80 Mennos, 50 ish Muskeg folks and 35-50 Open Door recent Canadians.
 - ii. **Mennonite/Muskeg Arts Event Proposal:**
 - Proposing an arts and crafts exhibition to highlight our shared human experience.
 - Possible components:
 - o Story-Telling
 - o Visual arts (painting, sculpture etc.)
 - o Artifacts
 - o Human Library.
 - o Brief Theater production
 - Location:
 - o Wanuskewin Heritage Park
 - o Diefenbaker Canada Centre
 - o Station Arts

- Timing; perhaps fall of 2018
- Possible grants to cover costs : Affinity Credit Union?
- Need ideas, Names of people: artists, storytellers and event planners.

c. Spirituality Resourcing Team:

- Pauline Steinman, Eileen Klaassen and Claire have been meeting every two weeks in preparation for offering weekend, retreat or other inputs to congregations to encourage spirituality. They are planning to invite Thomas Friesen to join them.
- They have been doing contemplative prayer, and doing spiritual direction together in preparation and are finding it a very invigorating experience.
- This group is sponsored by MC Sask, and hopes to be available to churches in the New Year.

4. Current Situation in China:

- Jeanette is recently back from 6 weeks in China. She discovered ‘Interesting times’ in the church and at universities. There is virtually no talk about Trump or the USA; they are clearly ‘old news’.
- Chinese National Politics is clearly becoming much more hard-line, resulting in the worst time for the church that Jeanette has ever seen. There is real pressure on the churches not to do anything; to keep their heads down. New school textbooks suppress much of the country’s history.
- This is a sudden and radical change from a few years ago when the group of Chinese pastors visited here. We work with pastors who represent half a million people. There are over 70 million Chinese Christians in total, about 3-4% of the Chinese population.
- Churches are eager for ideas on how to be healthy as a persecuted church, and are begging us to help them understand the Anabaptist story and its applications.

5. Our Role in International Witness:

- Jason Martin has been appointed the new MC Can International Witness person.
- The first thought was that he would coordinate itineration. But the new vision seems to encourage it to be organised on more of a regional church basis. “It’s a process”.
- George and Tobia Veith are the first question as they will soon be returning for winter holidays/leave.
- Are we ready to grasp this opportunity to be engaged internationally by welcoming and ‘using’ George and Tobia here in Saskatchewan?
- We could hold one or more regional events similar to the ‘Taste of China’ events we used to do.
- Could include storytelling, food, Skyping-in pastors from China, and many more things.
- **Jeanette** is willing to help organise a committee.
- **We are ready to own this!**

6. Refresh, Refocus, Renew:

- We have no real connection to Council. We used to have a Council rep at our meetings, but no more. This creates a real gap!
- Few of us are available to attend the Leadership Assembly at Osler MC on Nov. 25. Claire will make sure that we are represented.
- Too many of our people don’t understand even the basics of Anabaptism.

- We need to hear the stories of international folks who are discovering Anabaptism and getting excited about it.
- There are also important Canadian and local Anabaptist stories.
- How do we get our congregations to really listen to these stories?
- This is probably a bit beyond the domain of Ministries. **Pastoral Leadership Commission?**

7. Next Meeting:

- We will meet **Thursday** January 18 @ 7:00 pm at **Mount Royal Mennonite Church.**

Recorded by Eric Olfert
Drafted November 21/2017