

MC Sask Ministries Commission Minutes
January 21, 2020
6:30 pm
Mount Royal Mennonite Church, Saskatoon

Present: Claire Ewert Fisher (Chair), Nancy Epp, Jeanette Hanson, Eric Olfert, Sharon Schultz (Council Rep.) and Josh Wallace (Church Planter and interim MC Sask Church Engagement staff)

1. Introduction:

- Josh Wallace has accepted Kirsten's Church Engagement role from Feb.1 to Oct. 31. This plus finishing his dissertation, starting his church planting ministry and teaching a grad. class should keep him out of mischief.

2. Opening: Nancy Epp

- Nancy has felt God to be close several times this week. The Walking the Path meeting on Tuesday, a Book Study and Games & Faska event were times when God was clearly among us. Nancy opened in prayer.

3. Approval of Minutes of our 19-11-19 meeting – The minutes were approved.

4. Business Arising/ Ongoing Work:

a) Walking the Path – Nancy and Eric

i. Responding to 19-11-? Walking the Path Meeting:

- **A Restorative Justice Event with Harry Lafond:**
 - Ministries encourages Walking the Path not to lose this idea and offers assistance.
- **Promotion of Bill C262 Video:**
 - Again, Ministries affirms this idea and is willing to assist as required.
- **Montreal Lake Addictions Treatment Center:**
 - Apparently such a center exists. Claire will consult some of her contacts for more information.

ii. From 20-01-13 Walking the Path Meeting

- There were a number of new people, so Eric shared a 'Short History of Walking the Path' (also attached here).
- **RJC Report:**
 - o RJC is expecting to be represented on Walking the Path in the future by Zac Schellenberg, and students Shaelyn Nordmarken Kowaski and Mackenzie Rudolph.
 - o RJC continues to work more consciously at being aware of the culture within which we live. Muskeg Lake FN, Beardys FN and across the river One Arrow FN are neighbors. There is a lot of history to learn and relationships to grow and tend in order to be good neighbors. The goal is to learn to live in a way that is peaceful, loving and engaged.
 - o An internal RJC committee has been formed to pay special attention to these issues called 'Building Bridges with our Indigenous Neighbors' (BBIN).

- RJC yearns for structures to bring them intentionally together with First Nations neighbors.
 - Sports is a huge opportunity to build relationships. The Treaty 6 Invitational Soccer Tournament is one of the bridges.
 - Harry Lafond commented that Muskeg Lake Cultural Camp has a relationship with Prairie Spirit SD and would likely welcome conversation with RJC. Muskeg Lake would also welcome a return visit from the RJC Choir.
 - Val offered the contact information on the National Geographic map of Indigenous places and names on Turtle Island. Perhaps this could be part of a further bridging event?
- **Helping to Identify and Preserve Indigenous Holy Sites – David Neufeld:**
- We need to be more fully aware that God has walked with other peoples than just those coming out of the Middle East and Europe.
 - In their lives on Turtle Island, Aboriginal peoples worshiped and identified Holy Sites in many locations. Frequently these places were marked with rock circles and other formations.
 - When Aboriginal peoples were moved to reservations, many lost touch with these historical sites. As the land was developed and broken to the plow, many of these sites were and are still being destroyed.
 - Whether they know it or not, Western farmers/ranchers have by default become the custodians of these holy sites.
 - How can we as settlers become committed to honouring and preserving these sites? Can we start with Mennonite churches, learning to respect and honour this history, eventually inviting others to join?
 - The key challenge is changing attitudes. We need to model/teach respect, honour and ascribing value to these sites.
- **Timber Bay Children’s Home - Eileen Klassen Hamm:**
- Eileen gave us a very useful historical outline of the Timber Bay Children’s Home (TBCH).
 - It is clear that physical abuse and enforced loss of culture and language were part of the TBCH students’ experiences.
 - It is also clear that in later years TBCH made real and useful changes towards recognizing culture and language, building on a report by Menno Wiebe.
 - The Residential School settlement did not include TBCH, nor did the Day School settlement since Timber Bay Children’s Home was technically neither a residential school nor a day school.
 - We are not (neither MCC nor MC Sask) at this point in time legally implicated, but we feel relationally implicated.
 - **How might we pick up our relational duty?**
 - There is a group working to put up a memorial in memory of TBCH survivors. Supporting them would be an option.

- We need to hear people's pain (and we sense a relational responsibility). We need to think more about what this means and what is motivating this particular conversation at this time. What relationships are we assuming responsibility for? Who is asking us to do this? Do we know the details of our institutional story?

b) Spirituality Resource Team – Claire Ewert Fisher

- A Lenten Silent Retreat is being planned for February 29 at Ancient Spirals – cost \$30.00
- They are anticipating having a labyrinth.

c) Church Planting – Josh Wallace

- Josh reported on the Church Planting Congress in Montreal, which he attended with our support.
- Three solid, full, long days. The first day was led by New Leaf (Jared Siebert), entitled: Networks and Neighborhoods. There were a number of models presented:
 - Denominational
 - Jesus Collectives (Anabaptish) - Meetinghouse BIC example.
 - True City – geographic – Hamilton example.
 - Reunion Network – International.
- The main conference had 500-1000 people, with a wide variety of theologies and ideologies. Lots of Evangelicals, Pentecostals, Anglicans/Fresh Expressions, UCC, Alpha inspired RCs, and many more.
- There appears to be a growing awareness on all fronts that we are entering a new age for the church.
- God was clearly present at the closure event, leaving a sense of being blessed and sent.
- Next Congress will be in 2021 in Calgary, and there should be ca strong MC Sask contingent there.

d) International Witness MC Canada -Witness Support Teams: Jeanette Hanson

- Coming up with a solid model for Witness Support teams continues to be a difficult process.
- Instead of Support Networks of 5 or 6 individuals, they are now working at congregational groupings. This starts with inviting congregations with historic connections to ministries to form groupings.
- Church Engagement people in the Regional Churches are to identify interested congregations. A grouping could include congregations from any or all regional churches.
- Each congregation would identify a contact to tend the connection. These Reps would meet electronically at the beginning and occasionally (4 times a year?) to stay up to date.
- Congregations in these groupings are the 'champions' of their ministry in their regional church.
- At this time there are less than a dozen ministries, so there is room for that many groupings.
- The commitment needed will be relational, informational and financial.
- As the groups strengthen, they may want to try face-to-face visits. The Benin grouping has been going on alternating visits, with North Americans going to Africa one year and the partners from Benin doing return visits the next.

- We will talk about the Human Resources piece next meeting.

e) Leadership Assembly – Eric and Nancy

- Interesting discussion on vision and goals
- There was interest in the Timber Bay Children’s Home discussion.

5. Report from General Council – Sharon Schultz

- “Visioning Day on 2020 marks the end of MC Sask’s three year *Deepening Journey*. And while the year has just started, as we all know, the days, weeks and months, move fast. And before we move into 2021, I am proposing that our three primary commissions, MC Sask Council, PLC, and Ministries Commission, gather together for an MC Sask Visioning Day on Saturday, April 25. Location to be determined. The primary purpose of this day would be two fold, 1) reflect on where we have been on the RRR/Deepening Journey and 2) plan the theme/scripture focus/vision for the next two years. This theme would then direct our ADS planning, Equipping Day, Continuing Education, worship series, etc...and would start at ADS 2021.”

6. New Business:

a) Membership: Since Val and Joel have left us, we need some new blood.

- We like Leonard Doell for his aboriginal wisdom.
- We also need some younger blood, preferably with interest in creation care connected to faith.
- We name Nancy Epp as our second rep to Walking the Path.

b) Reconciliation Podcast:

- We will invite Heather Peters to give us a report at our next meeting

c) Bylaws: We read them over and affirmed the description of Ministries.

d) ADS Reporting: We have been given a half-hour for reporting. We will use half (15 minutes) for Church Planting (Josh and Cindy) and 15 minutes for Walking the Path (Harry and RJC?)

7. Financial:

- Our Budget comparison shows that we spent \$4156 of our allotted \$5000
- We have again been allotted a budget of \$5000 for 2020.

8. Next Meeting

- We will meet **Tuesday, March 17 @ 6:30 pm at Mount Royal Mennonite Church.**
- **Carry forward items:**
 - o Look at HR part of Witness Support arrangement.
 - o Have Heather Peters report on Podcast.
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Recorded by Eric Olfert
Drafted Jan. 23/2020