

## MC Sask Ministries Commission Minutes

November 17, 2020

6:30 pm

Via Zoom

**Present via Zoom:** Mark Bigland-Pritchard; Nancy Epp; Claire Ewert Fisher (Chair); Jeanette Hanson, Ron Nickel, Eric Olfert; Sharon Schultz (Council Rep.) and Josh Wallace (Church Planter and MC Sask Church Engagement staff)

### 1. Opening Reflections: - Ron

- The COVID regulations and situation don't leave much hope for a Merry Christmas.
- Ron reminded us of the story of a young lad herding the sheep who was sent to take food to his brothers on the front lines. Everyone was afraid of the 9-foot Philistine giant taunting the army of the Living God. Nobody would face the giant until the boy offered. The King offered his armor and weapons, but the boy took a few smooth stones from the creek and went to meet the giant. It is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves, for the battle is the Lord's.
- We confront our own Philistine giant today. Its defeat is beyond us. The battle is the Lord's. We haven't been here before, we don't know what to do, but God still has us in his hands.
- Ron opened in prayer.

### 2. Reviewed and Approved of Minutes of our 20-09-22 meeting:

### 3. Ongoing Work:

#### a) Walking the Path – Nancy and Eric

##### i. Getting a 'Sacred Sites' article into the Press:

- Phyliss has tried to contact Katya Macdonald but no response yet.

##### ii. Working with the Hubbard documentary: *nîpawistamâsowin: We Will Stand Up*

- Although we anticipate our working with 'We Will Stand Up' taking place next spring, it is important to begin preparing now.
- **Phyllis is willing** to identify tasks/steps towards that event.

##### iii. Ancient Echoes Documentary Proposal;

- Brad Leitch would do an excellent job of such a video, but it probably couldn't be done until the pandemic is in the past.
- An 'out of thin air' estimate of cost might be in the \$20,000 range.
- MC Canada would be in to help, but some substantial donors would be needed.
- Maybe the **concept should be to support a gathering of indigenous groups with history in the area and film that gathering.**
- That might well add another \$20,000 to the cost! But it would open funding options.
- Harry will talk to the Saskatoon Tribal Council.
- **Dave and Harry will sketch out** a process and proposal.

##### iv. 'Be it Resolved': Anabaptists and Partner Coalitions Advocate for Indigenous Justice. (1966-2020) - Steve Heinrichs and Esther Epp Tiessen.

- This is a powerful, just published collection of strong commitments made by Mennonites to our indigenous cousins. It clearly records that Mennonites are on record as seeing ourselves as enjoying treaty relations with autonomous peoples.

- Steve noted that under our new church structure, initiating and approving strong statements like these will now require commitment from the regional churches. So far it seems that being closer to the grassroots amplifies the cautious and negative voices and makes it difficult for the church to 'Go on Record' in principled ways like this.
  - Jeanette indicated that there is a pathway for regional churches to make joint statements, but it will take deliberate and focussed effort.
  - **Ministries is willing to take on a role in pushing** this kind of statements as appropriate.
  - For starters, Eric is asked to work with Randy Klassen to ensure that **MC Sask Council and Staff receive copies of 'Be it Resolved'**. Ministries will pay for them if necessary.
- v. A Catholic Church initiative supporting the Amazonian people in environmental recovery:**
- They are attempting to identify a way forward to work at the problems of the region.
  - There is a need to denounce ecological destruction and call for better stewardship of the environment
  - Harry is interested in creating a voice that is bigger than just one faith group. The process just started on the weekend, but Harry will try to invite us in as it becomes appropriate.
  - 'Lau Dato Si' on Indigenous understandings of creation is an important base.
- vi. Singing in the Arbor:**
- Harry would like to pursue another gathering around singing in the arbor at Muskeg Lake FN "before we forget!"
  - This will also need to await the end of pandemic restrictions but is important agenda!

**b) Creation Care – Mark**

- Mark finds himself in the midst of a wild flurry of events.
- The sessions from the Love of Creation are now public. See <https://fortheloveofcreation.ca>.
- Sessions include: **Creation, Climate and You**  
**From Concern to Action**  
**Build a Better Future**
- For the Love of Creation is doing a series of zoom meetings setting out the direction of its work – public engagement, advocacy with legislators, theological reflection and addressing our anxieties and fears.
- Mark is looking to do a series with congregations. Mount Royal MC is looking to pick this up.
- Stories about our experiences with creation care are still very much needed, especially stories from an indigenous perspective.
- We could invite Donna Schultz to help with writing stories.
- We could also talk to Arlen at Common Word archiving our stories/making them accessible.

**c) Church Planting; - Josh**

- Description from last meeting still fits. 'small group still defining goals and strategies. Pandemic both a burden and a blessing. Seems to reduce the pressure to show results and the extra time/reflective space has been a blessing. But also a lonely space where it is a struggle to keep focused.'
- Josh requests prayer and encouragement.

- Faith Leaders Council at U of S is doing a virtual 'friends for dinner' connection. Good way to connect with international students.
- **How can we encourage our church members in this difficult time? Some Ideas:**
  - o ½ day virtual workshop on dealing with stress?
  - o Shared virtual Christmas Concert?
  - o Friday morning 8:00 International hour of prayer organized by MWC twice a month. You need to register to get the link.  
<https://mwc-cmm.org/deacons-commission/mwc-online-prayer-hour>
  - o Have a regular input from elsewhere, with a prayer, thought and greeting etc.
- **Claire will write a note to the MC Sask office** encouraging them to think about this question.

**d) International Witness; - Jeanette**

- International Church day October 18 got strong participation.
- Three missions' covenants have been signed.
- Jeanette has spoken in recording at three churches.
- She has focussed on trying to help congregations to understand why it is important to be committed internationally. That these relationships can be mutually transformative!
- Trying to connect mutual interests. For example:
  - o Peace and Justice----- Mennonite Church of Colombia
  - o Rights of Women ----- Congolese Mennonite Church
- Climate Change is a huge issue for our brothers and sisters around the world.

**e) Report from Council: Sharon**

- Remember to participate in Visioning Day November 28 9:00 to 1:30

**4. Budget;**

**a) Current year 2020 Expenditures:**

- We have currently spent \$403 of \$5000.
- Additional expenses **approved for this year:**

Reconciliation Podcasts	\$1500
Labyrinth purchase	\$250
Friendship Inn for Potato Peeler	\$500
'Be it Resolved' book purchases	\$100

**b) Requested Budget for 2021:**

<b>Creation Care (tree planting/web design)</b>	<b>\$1000</b>
<b>Ancient Echoes Video Documentary</b>	<b>\$2500</b>
<b>Church Planting Conf &amp; Travel</b>	<b>\$1000</b>
<b>Grant Program</b>	<b><u>\$1000</u></b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5500</b>

**5. Next Meeting:**

- We will meet **Tuesday, January 19/2021 @ 6:30 pm at Mount Royal Mennonite Church.**

Recorded by Eric Olfert  
Drafted November 19/2020