

MC Sask Ministries Commission Minutes

January 18, 2020

6:30 pm

Via Zoom

Present via Zoom: Mark Bigland-Pritchard; Nancy Epp; Claire Ewert Fisher (Chair); Jeanette Hanson, Eric Olfert and Josh Wallace (Church Planter and MC Sask Church Engagement staff)

Excused: Ron Nickel and Sharon Schultz (Council Rep.)

1. Opening Reflections: - Claire, reflecting on a letter from Richard Rohr.

- Richard focussed on Moses' example of putting the tent of meeting 'outside the camp'. We don't need to follow worldly politics. We are even free from ecclesial politics.
- This idea of being outside the camp is the genius that inspired Jewish history. Scripture and the Gospel are rooted in this idea.
- Hebrews 13 is about going outside the camp to share Jesus' hardships.
- The denial of science and other truths is a sign of our times. In Exodus 33 Moses talks to the Lord outside the camp and brings back the wisdom to the people.
- The message for us as MC Sask is to explore who we are by stepping outside our camp.
- Claire opened in prayer.

2. Reviewed and Approved of Minutes of our 20-11-17 meeting:

3. International Witness:

- The MC Canada website lists the existing International Witness Support Networks.
- Currently there are 5 networks, 4 of them in places where there are Witness workers: China, Philippines, South Korea and Thailand. The fifth network supports ministry in Burkina Faso.
- Every congregation is invited to the table.
- Saskatchewan connections include:

o Rosthern, Swift Current and Carrot River	China
o Grace Regina	Philippines
o Eigenheim and Grace Regina	South Korea
- There are other interesting connections – the Leamington Gleaners group in helping Philippines set up a similar program.
- On Feb. 5 there is to be a conversation with the Colombian Mennonite Church.
- No Vietnam group as yet.
- The Africa group is with AIMM.
- There is also a separate Ethiopia group forming. The war there is complicating things. The MKC has members from many ethnic groups: Oromo, Amhara and Tigrayan as well as Eritreans. This makes their situation very complicated.
- There is also a Palestine/Israel Network group
 - o Wildwood has done a Palestine Blanket exercise.
 - o Mostly they relate to the Bethlehem Bible College.
 - o Students, Teacher Exchanges, Drivers etc. are options. (Buhlers did this from MRMCC some years ago)

4. Walking the Path:

a) Working with the Hubbard documentary: *nîpawistamâsowin: We Will Stand Up*

- We are proposing an intro zoom event for the evening of Thursday Feb. 25. This would include interaction with Tasha Hubbard (the creator of the Documentary), Another indigenous woman and hopefully Leonard Doell.
- Randy Klassen will run the zoom and screen/interpret questions coming to the panel as needed.
- The group would meet again Thursday evening, **March 4th for the post-viewing discussion.** Participants would be encouraged to view the documentary during the week between these dates.
- It may end up being wiser to separate out several groups for the post-viewing discussion, but this is yet to be decided.
- This event should be very low cost, mainly honoraria for outside participants.
- MCCS and MC Sask are invited to be official sponsors.
- Ministries Commission is willing to be on record as being a sponsor, but we probably can't speak on MC Sask's behalf.
- Eric and Claire will draft a message to MC Sask Council and forward it via Sharon, asking for official MC Sask sponsorship.

b) Ancient Echoes Documentary:

- We are making slow progress on this, largely because we want to be led by First Nations. This, plus the pandemic is stretching our timeline. Aboriginal people as well as settlers are of different mindsets regarding who should keep the history. Harry was very intrigued that the local municipality declared the petroglyphs as a 'Municipal Historical Site' and feels this may be an important precedent.

5. Creation Care - Marc & Jeanette

- Marc and Miriam Ullah have started their series with an adult education group from MRMC.
- This is clearly a learning experience for everyone involved and is looking good.
- Matt Braun continues to work on the tree planting idea.
- Osler MC has asked Marc to do an Energy Audit.
- Jeanette reports that Donna Schultz would be thrilled to either write stories or collect/edit them.
- In the same way that *Plant a Seed of Peace* told stories of feeding the enemy, we need a book of stories of saving the earth.
- Need indigenous, settler and international perspectives with a faith aspect
- If we give Donna the bare bones she will work with that.

6. Church Planting; - Josh

- a) The group continues to meet and discuss. COVID creates space for discerning vocation.
- b) Josh is anticipating the 20/21 Church planting congress in Calgary, hopefully in late October '21. He would like to plan to take 2 or 3 MC Sask people with him.
- c) Josh has several Workshop Options prepped to offer to congregations.
 - Being Missional in your Neighborhood.
 - What would ?? look like?
- d) Also, Josh is teaching classes on the afterlife in world religions and on Death and Dying.

7. Spirituality Focus – Ignatian Exercises - Claire

- 6 participants started this exercise in the MRMC prayer room on Saturday via zoom.
- Exciting so far.

8. Debrief from MC Sask Visioning Day Nov. 28

- Betty Pries led those attending in looking at the past, present and future of MC Sask.
- Past:
 - o We have given ourselves permission to be spiritual.
 - o Much lamentation.
 - o Of closed churches, about 1/3 have stopped attending, 1/3 are going to other denominations and 1/3 are in other Mennonite churches.
 - o We have found ourselves with no reorienting compass.
 - o Many significant changes.
- Present:
 - o We sense a strengthening of church family feeling.
 - o Cross experience nearing resurrection.
 - o 'Fake church is dying!'
 - o Moving away from Megachurch ideal.
 - o Learning how to engage our neighbor.
 - o Is church just Sunday morning, or is it more?
 - o There is a sense of uncertainty about where we are and where we are going.
 - o Unless the seed falls in the ground and dies....
- Future:
 - o There is a felt need to address the culture of lies.
 - o We need 'Shocking' preaching!
 - o We need to use our space for outreach.
 - o The institution is not sustaining us anymore.
 - o Eric recalled a speaker at a Church Planting Congress some 10 years ago in Calgary: He suggested that being 'Church' has 4 key functions:
1- Worship 2- Teaching/formation 3- Building community 4- Outreach/mission.
We have traditionally let worship determine the time and place for church (Sunday morning in a purpose-built building). This has worked OK for 2 & 3 but 4 has been a 'poor cousin'.
What would church look like if we made Outreach/Mission the organizing function?
 - o We need deep Scriptural study, Shocking preaching and Spiritual engagement.
 - o We are in the Age of Adaptability.
 - o We feel some optimism that God will do some amazing thing if we get on board.
 - o What is the Role of MC Sask?
 - o We need tents outside the camps.
 - o Is the role of Ministries to help congregations think beyond themselves to seeing God's Kingdom come on Earth?
 - o We need to open our holy imaginations.
 - o Not just new techniques or projects but how do we find our identity in God?
 - o Church exists by Mission as fire exists by burning.

9. Review of Budget;

- See below the Ministries Extract from the MC Sask Financial Report.

Ministries Commission (Schedule 3)	2021 Draft	2020 Budget	2020 Actuals
Revenue - Dues, Fees, Donations, Recoveries	\$0	\$0	
Education, Promotion & Outreach		\$9,000	\$2,000.00
Walking the Path	\$2,500		\$58.50
Creation Care	\$1,000		
Chaplain's Cell Phone	\$420		\$417.40
Church Planting Conference	\$1,000		
Church Grant Program	\$1,000		
Committee Travel & Expense	\$1,000		\$0.00
Events	\$0		\$0.00
	<u>\$6,920</u>	<u>\$9,000</u>	<u>\$2,475.90</u>

10. MC Sask Council – Josh

- The MC Sask ADS will be virtual.
- Theme “Called to Hear (Here)”
- 2 Breakout opportunities.
- Ministries, PLC and Council members asked to lead and take notes.

11. Next Meeting:

- We will meet **Tuesday, March 16/2021** @ 6:30 pm virtually.

Recorded by Eric Olfert
Drafted January 24, 2021