

MCCN Agenda – Virtual Meeting
November 19, 2011
9:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.

Present: Greg Bowman, Luke Gascho, Annalisa Harder, Dave Hockman-Wert, Joanne Moyer, Jennifer Schrock, Jim Smith, Karla Stoltzfus Detwiler

I. Devotional:

Luke read from John 1, concluding with the image of light shining in the darkness. He also cited a 12-step program from Alistair McIntosh's book *Hell and High Water*, and a diagram on the trajectory of environmentally responsible design from Bill Read. Luke pointed out that in both cases, these authors seem to be drawing upon Christian—even Anabaptist—vocabulary and ideas. The Read diagram moves from conventional to green, to sustainable to restorative to reconciliatory to regenerative.

Group Responses:

- Church needs better understanding of science. This may be part of our role as MCCN. Included in our goals.
- Church needs to not sell its birthright to technology, when regeneration and reconciliation are at the heart of the Gospel.
- MCCN is well positioned as having both theological credibility and scientific credibility.
- Need to bring integrity to both the science and theology we present.
- Can we identify 6-12 respected scientists who could write a series of articles in the Mennonite press?
- Beginning with food issues might make sense, since these are of intimate concern to all of us.
- Need to engage with people where they are.

II. Reporting on our personal engagements with creation care

Karla is helping to plan another Sustainable Food and Farming conference at Crooked Creek Christian Camp in March and is excited about the opportunities this provides to bridge the cultural divide between conventional and organic agriculture.

Karla also visited some inspiring sites during her six-week sabbatical. She mentioned Living Hope Farm, in Harleysville, PA, and a retreat center directed by Susan Klassen in Kentucky. Last summer she raised and sold flowers at a farmers' market.

Joanne was invited to First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg to do a session on ecology for a series on connections and alienation. She generated interesting discussion with a quiz on "How well do you know your watershed, soil types, energy sources, etc. She also reported that Charleswood Mennonite Church in Winnipeg held a footwashing service in the middle of a street as a way of protesting the Keystone XL pipeline.

Jennifer and her husband researched car options and learned about Partial Zero Emissions Vehicle engines (PZEVs). Due to California's stringent air quality laws, car manufacturers are capable of making engines that produce 1/5 the emissions of conventional engines, but they don't necessarily sell these cars in other states or market them. Sadly, this technology is

maintaining a low profile. Dan and Jennifer hope to change that, and began by buying a PZEV in Pa. Links to more information included in folder.

Greg's inspiration of late is a woman who is leading a local citizens' group. They are trying to put a community garden in a courtyard of mowed grass. This is in an area of Youngstown, Ohio, that has some of the highest rates of poverty in the US. Most of the labor for this project will come from an ROTC group, which is another new experience for Greg. "Light attracts light and you can shine together," he says.

Dave HW heard Bill McKibben speak twice in succession: on climate change, and also at a local foods breakfast, and was moved by these opportunities.

Annalisa is now engaged and planning to share her ecological footprint. She also has a part-time job working in a homeless shelter where she has had occasion to help clients learn how to cook healthier food. It has been instructive for her to realize how dependent people are on convenience foods.

Jim has enjoyed seeing how Everence's commitment to getting LEED® certification has influenced people's thinking in other arenas. Meanwhile, Jim's backyard has evolved over the last four years into a wheelchair-friendly outdoor setting with raised bed gardens, an outdoor fireplace, composting and a rain barrel. He can see it from space on Google Earth!

III. Comments on the MC USA and MC Canada Assemblies in July:

A highlight for Joanne was a convention site that got participants walking along a wetland stream with nesting red-tailed hawks. She carpooled with the person in charge of organizing the Canadian assemblies and is pleased with how keen this person is to improve the sustainability of the system. Joanne sees momentum going forward.

Jennifer and Dave mentioned interactions at MCUSA booth, where a wide variety of people dropped in, from psychologists to conventional farmers.

Luke is grateful for creation care's presence in the Purposeful Plan, which was introduced at the MCUSA's convention. Luke has been working with Andre Stoner Gingrich.

Karla appreciated how MC USA planners were so willing to collaborate with us. She is glad we had this example of a more sustainable event, with the green building.

IV. Budget:

Everence has had to economize due to difficult economic times and our budget has been reduced. In particular, the travel line item was cut to \$2000. Plans for a permanent intern position are not jeopardized. Greg asked whether the time has come to do some fundraising. We await greater clarity on how this recent development will affect us.

V. Website Update

Luke and Jennifer reported that we are in the midst of a web revision and switch to Drupal software. We are working with a Goshen company called Lightsky. Design goals include

simplifying navigation, integrating Facebook more effectively, showcasing our 100 Shades of Green congregations to greater effect and giving congregations the ability to edit their own creation care pages.

VI. Establishing goals and activities for 2012

- A. AREA REPS: MCCN will continue to pursue the idea of regional representatives. Joanne has put together a job description and found a regional representative for Manitoba and Saskatchewan.
- B. DISPLAYS: We discussed ways to overcome the practical realities of sharing displays, since multiple copies and shipping are both costly. Ideas included a powerpoint presentation introducing MCCN, a 2 ft. by 4 ft. poster that could be shipped economically, a set of pictures that people could print and display on any tri-fold and a regular .pdf version of the newsletter to post on a church bulletin board.
- C. WEBINARS: This is an exciting and doable project for us as the cost is modest and per minute and software is available to simplify the process. We are considering a webinar for Creation Care Liaisons on how to make a display and equip, educate, raise awareness. We also discussed a webinar for conference ministers.

D. STRENGTHENING OUR NEWSLETTERS:

Beginning in 2012, council members will take turns writing a column for the MCCN e-newsletter. We have not yet managed to get the out once a month, but that is the goal.

E. UPDATE ON MUSIC PROJECT

Joanne reported on a new direction for the “sense of place” music project. Bryan Moyer Suderman now prefers focusing on community music-making rather than on a consumer product. He will encourage groups of people in particular locations to work on songs about their setting and connect songwriters electronically through software such as SoundCloud. Bryan already has an on-the-ground group like this in Ontario to give the project energy. This could potentially result in a CD, but it would evolve organically. The council was enthusiastic about this shift in direction and eager to be involved. We can: promote it in newsletters and on the web site and plan ahead for ways other forms of art could be featured on our web site.

D. STRATEGIES FOR DRAWING MORE CHURCHES AND INDIVIDUALS

- Run more ads in church press once web site is done.
- Plan a webinar for church leaders
- Connect to people who are happy to take our message with them.
- Continue to strengthen what it means to be a 100 shades congregation.

E. RELATIONSHIPS WITH DENOMINATIONAL STRUCTURES: What are the hopes and directions? What are the current needs?

- Inclusion in the Purposeful Plan is significant.
- Joanne sent us a copy of a forceful speech on climate change made by Dr. Willard Metzger, the general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada. He also has a blog and is representing the Church at the climate talks in Durban right now. - Dave HW is now the treasurer of the Peace and Justice Support Network and can provide a link between MCCN and PJSN.
- MCUSA's new building in Elkhart carries a witness. People will be moving in soon.
- Connect to conference ministers.
- Prepare Powerpoint presentation on who MCCN is.

F. FILLING OPEN MCCN COUNCIL MEMBER POSITIONS

We aim to fill our open positions by March. A job description has been prepared. We plan to approach denominational leaders and also racial/ethnic groups within the Mennonite Church to see if they have recommendations. We also amended the job description to include the fact that CCC members need to be associated with a local Mennonite congregation.

VII. Next Meeting: March 9 to 10, 2012 in Goshen

We discussed inviting a guest from another Mennonite organization to facilitate future collaboration.