

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

Present: Greg Bowman, Luke Gascho, 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. For example, here are some of McIntosh's 12 steps:

Rekindle the interior life
Shift from violent to nonviolent security
Serve fundamental human needs
Value mutuality over competition
Make more with less
Regenerate community of place
Build strong but inclusive identities
Educate for ecological intelligence
Be open to grace and truth

The Read diagram moves from conventional to green, to sustainable to restorative to reconciliatory to regenerative. It is included in the folder with the minutes.

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. (See budget sheet included in folder.) 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. They reviewed an Excell sheet showing the proposed site structure and the design goals, which include showcasing the 100 Shades of Green congregations to greater effect. (See MCCNwebdesigngoals and folder)

Lightsky recommended that we work harder at Facebook rather than recreating a searchable directory. The home page will include a link to Facebook.

Liaisons in churches will be able to add information to their pages.

Question: Might council members be able to access the web site without involving central office? We think this is doable and a good idea to work toward.

VI. Establishing goals and activities for 2012

- A. AREA REPS: Liked the idea of regional nodes and representatives. In-person people connect better than impersonal methods. Joanne has put together a job description and found a person for Manitoba and Saskatchewan.
- B. DISPLAYS: Need people who can take displays to events. Joanne reported it is happening this weekend in Steinbach, MB.

Question: How can we overcome the practical realities of sharing displays? Multiple copies and shipping are both costly.

Ideas:

- How about a PPT presentation introducing Mennonite Creation Care Network?
- Could presenters have a unique symbol, like a branch? Something that is available everywhere and comes to represent MCCN?
- Create a poster 2 ft. by 4 ft. that could be shipped economically in a rolled up tube.
- Encourage people to be creative with local materials: potted plants, natural items.
- Provide set of pictures that people can print and display on a tri-fold display of the sort available in any office supply store.

- Each newsletter could be available in .pdf for congregations to post.
One-page.

C. WEBINAR IDEAS:

1. Use a webinar to train Creation Care Liaisons in how to make a display and equip, educate, raise awareness.
2. This is doable for us. Software is available to make preparations easy. Costs for hosting a webinar are per minute. Individual user doesn't pay anything. Is not cost prohibitive for us.
3. A webinar can be recorded and viewed later.
4. AMBS is using webinars and could be a model for us.

D. STRENGTHENING OUR NEWSLETTERS:

Would council members be willing to take turns writing a column for our newsletter? The group was willing to do this but people need deadlines. Jennifer will provide them!

E. UPDATE ON MUSIC PROJECT

1. Joanne reported on a new direction for the sense of place music project. Bryan Moyer Suderman was struggling with creating a quality project on a limited budget. He now prefers focusing on community music-making rather than on a consumer product. Encourage groups of people in particular locations to work on this and connect them 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.
2. Dave mentioned Playing for Change. Connects people playing a song; enables patching and mixing.
3. What is MCCN's role in Bryan's community music-making? Do we want to be involved? 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
 - label his group with our name and label? Add to his web site, our logo, hyperlink, donate button.
 - think of this as a "partner group."
 - link from our resources page.
 - host a webinar about songwriting, connecting to a sense of place, thinking about how art connects us and inspires change.
 - emphasize faith elements-
 - have a gallery of poetry, art, photographs, song on the web. Begin with Bryan's group and plan ahead as to how other arts could be involved.
 - sponsor an Ecopalooza: virtual traveling show.

D. STRATEGIES FOR DRAWING MORE CHURCHES AND INDIVIDUALS

1. Run more ads in church press once web site is done.
2. Plan a webinar for church leaders

3. Connect to people such as the peace coordinator in MB; those who are happy to take our message with them.
4. 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?

1. Inclusion in the Purposeful Plan is significant.
2. 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. We are inspired by his leadership and hope for more of the same from other venues. We will pursue a relationship with Metzger.
3. Dave HW is now the treasurer of the Peace and Justice Support Network and can provide a link between MCCN and PJSN. Its new leader, Jason Boone, Raleigh, NC, has a strong interest in linking to creation care.
4. MCUSA's new building in Elkhart carries a witness. People will be moving in soon.
5. How can we connect with conference ministers? They have a binational meeting coming up soon. How can we be present or connect to already existing events that they attend. Webinar for conference ministers?
6. Again, we need an organic presentation on who MCCN is. Annalisa will work on this.

F. FILLING OPEN MCCN COUNCIL MEMBER POSITIONS

Note the job description for council members included in the 11-19 related documents folder and continue to think of possible candidates. Dave Bergen is working on this process in Canada. We should have someone by March.

Suggestions:

Approach racial/ethnic groups within the Mennonite Church to see if they have recommendations. Also approach church leadership.

Add to job description: CCC members need to be associated with a local Mennonite congregation.

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

Joanne suggested having a guest Friday evening at our next meeting, as we did when Jim Alvarez and Chris Meyer shared about Everence's efforts to be green. Luke suggested Andre Gingrich Stoner, MC USA's director of interchurch relations.