

MCCN Virtual Meeting

September 4, 2014, 7-9 pm

Present:

Marlisa, Dave, Jim, Luke, Jennifer, Janie, Joanne, Greg

Mike: delayed arrival, present for the later half of the meeting

Opening: Luke

Psalm 85

Agenda Items:

1. A quick check in from each member on a creation care activity

2. Update on and next steps for the “Every Creature Singing” curriculum

Marlisa updated us on her congregation’s experience with the curriculum

- Team-taught by 6 people over the summer
- Attendance was consistent at around 20 people in the class, probably around 40 people coming in and out
- Prompted good discussion, there were more people drawn into the conversation compared to when they’ve focused on CC in the past
- She reflected that the mix of applying it to where we live, focus on local watershed and homes along with theology and practical applications appealed to people in a very positive way
- Seemed to provide a springboard for reflection on what more to do in the congregation related to CC, prompted fresh ideas
 - *e.g. biking & walking to church in a more formalized way, visioning where this could go in the future, how to make CC more central even at the board level of the church
- Last Tuesday was the most recent congregation CC meeting, and a couple more people joined this group because of their participation in the curriculum class
- The church offered this class because Marlisa let her congregation know that the curriculum was being piloted, and it fit well with plans for the summer. The idea was taken up right away.
- This is a good way to give more visibility to MCCN, to let people know that we exist, and that there is a reason to go to the website and see what is available there. If you haven’t already, let your congregations know that the curriculum is out there, ready to be used.**

Jennifer’s curriculum update:

- Curriculum was proofread and formatted this summer
- Final version of the curriculum will be posted in time for the Rooted and Grounded conference at AMBS (Sept. 18-20)

-Curriculum will be promoted at the conference. Jennifer will be giving a paper using one of the essays from the curriculum, as well as a workshop using the eco-lens questions. She also sent these as submissions for MC USA convention in 2015.

-Website update: We are going to try a new approach and withhold the leader's guide online. Users must request it by filling out a survey or emailing us. Few people have filled out these surveys voluntarily, so this is an attempt to keep track of new users.

Joanne is looking into "translating" for Canadian congregations. She has requested that MC Canada provide some paid staff time. No word on this yet.

3. Report on Sound in the Land conference at Conrad Grebel (Joanne)

Highlights: lots of good music! But the folk music concert was not as well attended as she had hoped, due to a number of reasons. There were only a handful of audience members, which was unfortunate for the musicians who had been recruited.

She attended a particularly interesting session featuring a person who makes violins, and enjoyed learning about the relationship between wood and sound.

Jennifer requested a short write-up for the newsletter and website on the overall Sound and Land experience, potentially featuring violin construction

Greg wondered if there might be any interest among these musicians in partnering with and promoting MCCN

4. Discuss MCCN's role and/or action regarding the fossil fuel resolution being prepared for MC Canada. (See Joanne's email on July 15. Resolution is attached)

-Mark Bigland-Pritchard of Low Energy Design (Saskatchewan, consultant in energy, environmental assessment, green building, and architectural physics) wrote the resolution, but submitted too late to be voted on at the assembly this summer.

-Now it will be referred to the MC Canada general board, and they will vote on the resolution in November

-Mark has requested that people and congregations in support of the resolution email the board in time for the vote

-He wants to get the resolution passed before the next national election so that Canadian Mennonites have an official stance on this issue.

-Joanne brings this to the MCCN council wondering if we would like to endorse the resolution and send our support to the board.

-MC Canada's resolution has a different focus than the one we submitted for MC USA. MC Canada already has a general direction/theological commitment resolution. The proposed Canadian resolution is more directly about climate change and fossil fuels.

Council Responses:

-Luke's response: he personally affirms having this work undertaken. It's more of an issue of how things get worked out with church structures and processes, rather than expressions of support or endorsements. With that in mind, we could say something like **"we as a council affirm the work of addressing fossil fuel use, and would affirm MC Canada's engagement of this issue within their processes in an expeditious way."**

-It would strengthen the resolution to **appoint a group to take charge of the process**. Putting all of the work and action on the board is not a good idea. Not just a panel of scientists, but also a theologian or two, a financial expert, etc.

-The **title of the resolution** is about fossil fuels, but the actual resolution is more broadly about climate change issues. The title should reflect this.

-It is a very specific suggestion to ask all churches to study the IPCC report. Is that really going to happen?

-Joanne suggests a volunteer panel or subgroup of scientists who could take the info from the report and help folks understand it.

-The **scientific language** used in the resolution is difficult to digest. Perhaps revisit the usage of "whereas."

-There is a disconnect between the opening lines and the scientific pieces. The link feels thin. By the time the reader gets to the resolution, they might be worn out. Instead, perhaps **provide a short (couple paragraph), compelling summary and move the resolution piece much sooner. The scientific information can be included in an appendix.**

-Use **bolded bullet points** so that you can look at the resolution and understand the main points easily at-a-glance

"Repent"

-One strength of MC USA's resolution is the link to practical ways congregations and individuals can respond. MC Canada's resolution could be made stronger by **adding practical ideas for local contexts**. Could the resolution connect back to MCCN and our resources?

5. Assembly Plans

a. Seminar plans for MC USA assembly in Kansas City - July 2015 — and booth concepts

-Skip discussion of the booth for now, but be thinking about ideas. We'll discuss at a later date.

-Luke has been in touch with Hannah Heinzekehr (convention planning committee) requesting a focus on CC topics and delegate time related to continuing work with the resolution.

-Hannah reports that there will be a CC track at convention, and there have been seminars on this topic already named. She will send a list of the approved seminars/workshops on the CC theme.

-There will be experiential learning pieces in the Kansas City area related to environmental injustice and racism

-There will be attention given to rural churches and various needs related to environmental issues from this context

-Jim, Luke, and Judy Martin-Godshalk (Communications Manager at Everence) will give a joint seminar on church green buildings. This has already been accepted.

b. Mennonite World Conference - July 2015

Jennifer, Dave, Joanne, and Marlisa are all attending/thinking about attending

Nothing CC related has percolated to Luke's knowledge

Marlisa was contacted by Merle Good (?) about a year ago asking if she would like to be involved with environmental issues at world conference. She will contact him and follow up on these developments.

c. MC Canada - July 2016

will be held in Saskatoon

6. Explore the connection between the goals of MCCN and the issues regarding the Doctrine of Discovery (Luke attended the roundtable meeting in San Francisco on August 21-22 where we explored ways for MC USA pursue change regarding the Doctrine of Discovery. The work in Canada on Truth and Reconciliation models actions that can be taken. Steve Heinrichs' book, Buffalo Shout Salmon Cry contains an important set of essays on this topic. I've attached a summary document describing the Doctrine of Discovery. The action steps from the roundtable are still being written up.)

Luke's report:

- About 20-22 present, including a woman from the Canadian group Kairos
- Addressed the ways this work could be introduced at upcoming assemblies.

Political actions? Artwork?

- Coming to terms with the ways scripture has been used to support injustice and stealing land from others. Postcolonial theology.

- Pacific North/Southwest were most represented, Luke was surprised that he was the farthest east person there

- Erica Littlewolf was there, but Luke wondered why there weren't more people who are actually involved in Mennonite Native American ministries present. It seems there has been some leaning of that group toward a more evangelical approach that doesn't include as strong of a social justice focus (partly because of the pastors leading the Native American Mennonite churches). It is a disconnect for many of the folks in these churches to get involved in this realm.

- There was not a big resolution or plan of action that came out of this

- There are some video clips linked in the .pdf sent by Luke that would be interesting to explore. (Check out the piece by Sarah Augustine in particular.)**

Why are Mennonites involved in this work?

Dave: the Doctrine of Discovery was created in the context of Christendom, by the Catholic Church in the 14-1500's, when our tradition was also being persecuted by these same leaders and power structures. What is the connection to Mennonites? Can you help me understand that?

Luke: you're right, the origins of this do come out of the Catholic Church and exploration of the New World concepts. Part of the connection is that many European Mennos benefitted from this document's application across North America. For example, in Northern Indiana, the US gov't continues to operate

with the Doctrine of Discovery concepts. It is important to recognize how the lands we call our own now have this heritage. Another connection is the importance of simply acknowledging this history and learning how to respond differently to indigenous people and our present situation. We must recognize that so much international work is still based on concepts of this document. Extraction of minerals, deforestation, all of these industrial activities tend to follow this same principle.

We are not simply saying we are the ones who created it, but recognizing that we are the ones who continue to benefit from it.

7. Joanne's Creation Care primer

Joanne: the idea for this primer is not to create all the categories or provide all the actual resources, but to point people to the right places to find the things they are looking for. We need to connect people with resources in the local areas rather than trying to do all things for all people.

8. Farming Conference (Greg)

There have been 5-6 sustainability conferences that have taken place at Laurelville in PA. Greg has been involved in planning all of them.

Merry Lea is the proposed location for the next conference in 2015. Planning is in process.

9. Other

-Attention Council Members: if you are sending something for the newsletter or something to be sent out to the network, please use the following email address so that both Jennifer and Janie receive it: mccn@goshen.edu

Next Virtual Meeting: January 8, 2015