

**Board for National Mission Meeting**  
**February 26, 2021**  
**Zoom Meeting**

**Call To Order**

The meeting was called to order by Rev. Briel at 9:00 am. All members (Rev. Peter Bender, Rev. Steve Briel, Ms. Carla Claussen, Rev. Tim Droegemueller, Rev. Dr. Al Espinosa, Mrs. Carol Hack Broome, Mrs. Janis McDaniels, Mrs. Martha Milas, Mrs. Crysten Sanchez, Rev. Dr. Dien Ashley Taylor) except Mr. Patrick Kyler were present.

Staff in attendance were Rev. Kevin Robson, Mrs. Jeannie Smithson, Mrs. Barb Below, and Ms. Stacey Egger.

Rev. Dr. Taylor led us in Matins. He shared a meditation on Mark 4. It is a new day. We walk by faith, and not by sight. We are reconciled to Christ.

**Approval of Minutes**

The October 2020 minutes were presented. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mrs. McDaniels and seconded by Ms. Claussen. Question for clarification made by Rev. Dr. Espinosa. Motion was passed unanimously.

**President Report, Rev. Matthew Harrison**

Highlights: There have been challenges but blessings as well. Great collaboration in the International Center and Rev. Harrison is thankful for all the staff.

We're in a great place financially, the best in years. Unrestricted net assets deficit is at \$10M after it was at \$17M a few years ago and \$15M last year. \$20M is in place for future projects from the BOD funds. The 2020 PPP loan will be forgiven \$3.8M, and a few more will bring that figure down to about \$3M.

As for challenges, Synod is no longer financially backing the CUS as that has shifted to LCEF. The Secretary of Synod has sent out new survey to see where things are in regards to COVID's affects. Anecdotal responses are that numbers seem to be up where churches are open. We're also receiving members from other denominations that have remained closed the whole time and need church.

From the COP, Rev. Lange is working on the license lay deacon issue. There are resolutions to shift that to SMP colloquies.

OIM is still working through COVID. They'll be placing graduates from the Brazilian seminary (our second oldest partner church) soon. We're getting to the point where all missionary are funded a full year ahead. Madagascar has a new Bishop who is a CTSFW PhD grad. There will be fellowship discussion with them in September at CTCR. Our Finnish partner synod has a new bishop who is supporter and friend of us.

On the ONM side, the MDFL conferences have been experimental but Rev. Zagore has handled it beautifully.

From the CUS, he spoke of the closure of CCNY by commending the district leadership. The LCEF helped financially for awhile, but there remained a lack of Lutherans in the area and a lack of enrollment at the school. CUC is the next most challenging situation. They have taken pretty dramatic steps to reduce numbers, expenditures, removed programs that weren't aligned with the faith.

91% of congregations who voted (which was a high amount for a special synod vote) to move the 2022 convention to 2023.

At the seminaries, Rev. Tom Egger is the new president in St. Louis and Rev. Rast is at Fort Wayne for another five years. Great respect for both men.

The CTCR has been in conversation for the last year or so to address race and specifically Critical Race Theory. Rev. Woodford from MNS spoke very forcefully and respectfully about the issue after the George Floyd murder. The CTCR doesn't want to produce a document but rather a conversation. Once the world opens up, will be setting this up.

Rev. Dr. Espinosa: How are we to address the onslaught of cultural issues? Rev. Harrison responded that politics is not our game. We have got to be the church. The church's forte is not political action, but prayer and catechizing our own, teaching the faith. The LCMS will become smaller. The demographics will prove that we'll be smaller, but will we be stronger? We either confess the faith or we don't. It'll make us confessionally stronger and united, or will make us grow cold. How much can we control it as BNM, we must be realistic. Be open to diversity, concentrate on the New Testament, Small Catechism teaching. Be responsible Lutherans, recognize the catholicity of the church. Whatever we do, do it well. If we can not do it well, don't do it.

#### **Chief Mission Officer Report, Rev. Kevin Robson**

See attached report.

Highlights: The joint BIM/BNM document has gone out and for those who have used it, there has been nothing but positive feedback.

In terms of the FY22 budget proposal the big question is specific positions to add. (OIM Director of global safety and security / Recruitment director).

In the BIM, they added nine new missionaries, including a returned call for Concordia Hanoi. They'll look to fill that position soon.

In the OIM, there is now an accredited BTH program with the Latvian seminary. It is an English speaking program with a bachelor degree and certification in ministry. It came to be after a conversation with CUI and the two seminaries. It's an online program in pilot mode with general theology classes. So far there are 35 participants in Eurasia and a few from Africa!

A new website, LCMS Missions Unpacked, looks at all 4 international regions and there are tons of resources. It gives a flavor of what it is to serve in these overseas settings.

In Pastoral Ed, the church worker recruitment is coming along, working with COMMs. Over the next few months and year we'll see many more outward facing resources and documents. There's a new White Paper on the current context of pastoral formation.

Synod 101 is a new program aimed at recent set graduates to talk about how we get things done (video modules, 2-3 min). It'll be piloting that through the PALS program through the next year.

Fundraising is all going well. Targeted \$2M this year, just passed \$3M. Thanks be to God! Coming after continuing engagement with Donors. Working with Mission Central to make sure we can take over what Gary Theiss does when his time to retire comes.

Looking ahead to possibly being shut out of social media and how to be ahead of that. What's the efficacy of being on those platforms? Is it a good or a bad? Conversation taking place in COMMS right now.

Rev. Droegemueller: Thanks be to God for the leadership he has provided in Revs. Harrison, Robson, and Zagore.

### **The Church and Current Culture**

Rev. Dr. Espinosa wondered how we'll be moving forward in changes in social media. Rev. Robson: Innovation, bringing email lists together, etc. Can we work with other conservatives in a research project in the potentiality of working with those core groups so we can respond appropriately?

### **Office of National Mission Unit Executive Report, Rev. Bob Zagore**

Highlights: He shared items that are not in the program ministry reports. They're doing great work and those show that work well.

The ONM continues to engaged with the church by phone calls to each district and the MDFL conferences. No other church body is doing what we're doing!

MDFL conferences:

January 2020 received amazing response.

March 2020 cancelled for COVID

October 2020 was the largest hybrid conference we've ever done which happened alongside MNS. It worked well!

January 2021 was the largest LCMS online conference (900 registrants, 600 watched during the conference). It was an Ongoing conference with resources still available.

March 2021 is the upcoming life conference and it builds on what they've learned. It has the purpose of building together a structured group.

September 2021 planning hybrid MDLF - Building on COVID's gains; Welcoming new and old into the church; RSO; Disaster training/response; Chaplaincies

The MDFL website up and running, but major revisions still in the works.

Engaging the clergy - Take Heart Conferences, working with Doxology, will have over 1000 pastors served over two years.

Soldiers of the Cross Amplified fund - \$1.3M given through workers who have been severely affected by the last year.

Esther 4:14 grants - replacing the domestic grant cycle for technology improvements in congregations.

Budgets - FY21 saw a loss of 13.8 full time equivalent positions. Hoping to add 2.5 in to FY22 (Assoc. Director of Schools; Director of Family and Health Ministry; Facilitator of Specialized Pastoral Ministry (1/2 FTE))

Looking at major revision for endorsements of SPMs; Changes in Campus Ministry (now officially under Youth); Mental Health Task Force (major initiative for child protection)

Sizable conversation from Rev. Dr. Espinosa: clarification on synod employees, contractors, etc. Could we look to work on multiple contracts to do the work of family and health ministry so it doesn't go undone? Rev. Zagore spoke frankly that yes, this is possible and they're look-

ing at it already as contingencies. What do the times call for? For us to be responsive and responsible. Conversation about what work should take place and how it should be done, especially focusing on supporting the family and directing them on the work of the home and the work of getting people into Heaven.

#### **Bylaws 3.8.2.2 & 3.8.3.2 - Updates, continuing work**

What do we still owe the convention before 2023? Providing a joint overture with the BIM on the mission priorities. The BIM discussed an approach to this and the BIM suggested another joint committee with a possible survey of stakeholders. Mrs. Kris Bruss and Rev. Dave Stechholz are the appointees from the BIM.

We had a discussion of this work, and of the role and responsibilities of our boards. Clarifying the scope of doing a better job in the monitoring area. BIM is working towards the same goal, but a step or two behind us.

Mrs. Hack Broome asked that the Secretary of Synod speak with us to task us what we can actually do. Rev. Bender expressed frustration on lack of work being done to this point (he and Mrs. McDaniels are still waiting to accomplish the work tasked to them in October).

Rev. Robson suggested Rev. Briel have a conversation with Mr. John Edson and Mr. Jim Wolf from the BIM to provide direction to the work. The board approves for him to do so with Mrs. Hack Broome and Rev. Bender. Mrs. Hack Broome expressed the opinion that we as a board prepare a plan that is dependent on our board instead of the BIM's action.

Rev. Bender suggest we change the October resolution to reflect only the work of the BNM. Ms. Claussen suggested we amend that resolution in the afternoon.

#### **Break for Lunch to 12:20 pm**

#### **Ministry Director Presentation: Worship**

##### **Rev. Sean Daenzer**

Currently, Let Us Pray is the most utilized offering that Worship puts out. They're looking to front load the work with consistent prayers for the one- and three-year lectionaries instead of taking it more one week at a time.

There has been a long breakdown of networking among church musicians. Rev. Daenzer is beginning the process of finding where the musicians actually are, much like the ongoing Disaster LERT volunteer database.

Planning on postponing the worship institute, looking at more regional options instead.

They are undertaking an overdue update on AV/Tech at IC chapel.

Through COVID, they have worked to keep consistency in praying for the church, as the church, even when not everyone is gathered like normal. All trying to move towards gathering together again when able.

The LSB still very much in use and supported, but Rev. Daenzer is considering the extreme beginning processes of looking towards another hymnal. Perhaps looking towards a hymnal supplement or something like that. Over 80% of congregations had made purchases of LSB, but he's uncertain of the actual usage.

Mrs. Hack Broome: What can you do to support more consistent worship across synod? Rev. Daenzer: We went from “uniformity” to “variety” and maybe “consistency” is more appropriate. Find consistency long enough so that the variety may come naturally.

### **Ministry Director Presentation: Church Planting**

#### **Rev. Steve Schave**

A healthy body is one that reproduces; so, too, is a healthy church.

Church planting often brings fear, but it shouldn't. Three defining factors:

- 1: An intentionally organized gathering.
- 2: Which comes together on a regular basis for the purpose of worship and/or bible study.
- 3: Which is intended to growing a member LCMS congregation.

Why do it?

- 1: It's the most effective means to reach the lost.
- 2: It energizes the base (gets the mother church back to her prime).
- 3: Wonderfull cross-cultural or multi-ethnic implications for the church at large.

Four keys to healthy starts:

- 1: Meeting in public places.
- 2: focus on outreach.
- 3: supporting the church planter.
- 4: starting more churches is in the DNA of a new start (they don't see themselves as “the end product.”)

Success factors: the mother congregation does it, not district. Also, shift to relationships, one on one relationships instead of big launch of facility and staff. Choose a community in which to reach out. Replants from multi-closing congregations because the base is already there.

Historically in the LCMS, church planting was as natural as families having kids. A church body needs to be reproducing to be healthy.

### **Ends Policy Review:**

#### **Policies under Mission Priority #1**

We began the process of reviewing the policies under Mission Priority 1, but came to conclusion that doing so would not serve us well because we need to discuss what we're actually reviewing.

We decided to table the discussion until later in the meeting when we will deal with: October's Sub committee; Bylaw 3.8.2.2; Policy plan between meetings.

### **Board Self-Assessment Recap, LCMS Rosters & Statistics**

Mr. Ryan Curnutt

We were given our report card from the self-assessment. There is much to discuss! We'll add it to the June meeting agenda.

### **Break**

### **Theological Presentation**

**Rev. John Pless**

**Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN**

The way the Missouri Synod relates to other synods, as viewed through the life and work of Hermann Sasse. From Rev. Sasse: do not engage in practice of church fellowship without unity of confession!

### **Mission Board Sub-Committee Discussion**

Rev. Robson asked if he could share our work with the BIM if we pass it. We approved him doing so.

### **Mission Board Sub-Committee**

Resolved, to establish a Sub-Committee of the Board for National Mission on the working relationship and authority of the mission board, especially in the policy making and goal identification role and responsibilities, with respect to Synod officers, staff and other boards (including the President, Chief Mission Officer, the Office of National Mission and the Board of Directors), in establishing the Synod budget and in setting the priorities of the mission and ministry of the Synod.

#### **The Task of the Sub-Committee shall be:**

- To make inquiry of the Secretary of the Synod—and the Commission on Constitutional Matters and Commission on Handbook, as deemed necessary by the Sub-Committee—concerning the parameters and extent of the authority of the Board for National Mission, particularly with respect to formulating the synodical budget and in setting the priorities of the mission and ministry of Synod, in order to sharpen and expand mission board members' understanding of the same.
- Formulate, if the Sub-Committee deems appropriate, any statement to be shared with the Board of Directors concerning a desire to increase their collaboration with the Board of Directors in the Synod's annual budget preparation process, with particular attention given to close reflection of the Synod's mission and ministry emphases and priorities.
- Recommend self-governance or ends policies that define and improve the process for which such fruitful engagement with the President, the Chief Mission Officer, the Office of National Mission, and the Board of Directors (respecting the BOD's role and responsibilities, authority and existing policies) would take place.
- Recommend overtures, as may be needed, for the Board for National Mission to submit to the Synod in convention to further clarify the role, responsibilities, and authority of the Board for National Mission.

The makeup of the Sub-Committee shall consist of four members of the Board for National Mission. The Chief Mission Officer will serve as a non-voting advisory member.

The motion was made by Rev. Bender. Ms. Claussen seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Rev. Briel appoints Rev. Bender, Rev. Dr. Espinosa, Mrs. Hack Broome, Mrs. McDaniels.

### **BNM Roles & Responsibilities, Brainstorming**

#### **Monitoring Reports - Review**

After much discussion, the following procedure will take place:

1. Mrs. Sanchez will compile a list of thoughts and questions from this meeting so that nothing gets forgotten/lost. This will be done within two weeks to the Executive Committee along with the completed minutes. Once that is approved, it will be sent within four weeks to the board. In the second document would consist of:
  1. Rev. Dr. Taylor's initial questions for the board to consider (emailed document)

2. Future considerations for the board (From Mrs. Hack Broom: both “check the boxes” work as well as step back and see what else we could be doing as a synod)
  3. Proposed Agenda changes (more time for reports, more time for policy work, feedback from BNM/BIM mailing; compiled list of ends policies and where they are being used/addressed by the directors)
  4. Rev. Zagore’s and Rev. Robson’s responses to Rev. Bender’s question below.
2. Mrs. Sanchez will compile a list of our ends policies and go through the previous reports and mark which policies are being addressed and which are being ignored. (Mrs. Milas suggested the plan; Ms. Claussen liked the idea)
1. Rev. Bender: How do we take the information from the ministry area reports and ask the tough questions as to whether or not they are doing what we’re asking? Are they meeting the policies that we have, or do we need to adopt more and better policies?
  2. This will be done by the June meeting where we will have it on the agenda and decide how to use it in the future.
3. The sub committee appointed above will begin its work to be completed by the October 2021 meeting. After that, the pre-convention work would be taken up.

Rev. Bender asked Revs. Robson and Zagore: Can you name three top priorities you’d like to see from the BNM? What’s the one thing you’d rather us not do, leave you alone about?

Rev. Zagore: Would like the ability to have the board become a more active advocate for embracing the paths that we take to the ends policies and communicating them to the synod. Would like the members of the board to be advocates of the work we’re doing within their districts in their frame of living. Would love feedback on whether we’re on the right track or not.

He expressed that the board can be advocates of what the ONM is working towards with simple articulation of what is happening.

Rev. Robson: Echoed Rev. Zagore’s sentiments. Also, that the board become more specific and directive and participative in setting actual concrete goals for the ONM. In the laundry list of where we can make policy the very first item of focus needs to be STRONG NATIONAL MISSION LEADERSHIP. What does that mean to the board, and what does that look like concretely in practice? Create ends policies that identify what we want that to look like. Generative conversation about relative priorities and how resources should be allocated.

Rev. Dr. Espinosa suggested that perhaps we don’t have theological presentations for meetings right now. Also, could we meet every month and a half? Revs. Robson and Zagore see no reason we can’t on zoom, but we can’t expect full reports from IC staff. Rev. Bender expressed that we won’t add more work for the staff! The Executive Committee will discuss in between meetings and agendas moving forward.

### **Foundation Board Report - Mrs. Carol Hack Broome**

There have been staggering losses in staff. The Foundation performance has gone well in terms of investment performances. There may be a hole in the future of funding, but a lot of good work is happening to try to fix that before it happens. Fantastic marketing effort going on. Very favorable report.

### **Wrap-up/Other Business**

Delay of 2022 Synod National Convention to 2023 - Rev. Robson: because of the extra year, some of the deadlines don’t have as much time pressure, but will still do what we

can to provide as much information to the districts that are actually meeting this summer.

Our next meeting will be June 10-22, 2021; Rev. Briel will be the chaplain. Included on that agenda will be the board self-assessment and all of the discussion items above.

Rev. Dr. Espinosa recommend that we do another Zoom meeting middle of April, and then at that time have a better idea of what the summer could look like.

Rev. Dr. Espinosa move that we meet in mid-April and make a final decision at that time. Mrs. Milas seconded. Rev. Bender expressed that he doesn't think we should meet plenary in April. We could discuss June meeting then, but not plenary. Mrs. Sanchez suggested an email check in could work. Mrs. Hack Broome suggested that a mid-meeting would be better in August so that we have more work done on our tasks. Rev. Dr. Taylor expressed that quarantine post-travel would affect a decision.

Mrs. Hack Broome moved to amend the motion to change the date to August. The motion dies.

Ms. Claussen moves to amend motion to have Mrs. Smithson send an email check in about our June meeting plans in mid-April. Rev. Bender seconded. The board passed this amendment.

The question is called. The motion as amended passes.

Rev. Dr. Taylor led Daily Prayer: Early Evening and the singing of Jesus, Lead Thou On.

Ms. Claussen made a motion to adjourn. Mrs. McDaniels seconded. Passed. Meeting adjourned.