

**Board for National Mission Meeting
February 5, 2020
Hilton St. Louis Airport Hotel
St. Louis, MO**

Call To Order

The meeting was called to order by Rev. Briel at 8:07 am. All members (Steve Briel, Crysten Sanchez, Carol Hack Broome, Peter Bender, Carla Claussen, Tim Droegemueller, Martha Milas, Janis McDaniels, Dien Taylor) were in attendance except Rev. Dr. Al Espinosa who was engaged in other business.

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

Rev. Droegemueller led opening devotions with Morning Prayer.

Approval of Minutes

The September 2019 minutes were presented. The September 12, 2019 minutes received small amendments. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mrs. Hack Broome and seconded by Mrs. Milas. Motion was passed unanimously. The September 13, 2019 minutes were presented. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Claussen and seconded by Mrs. McDaniels. Motion was passed unanimously.

President Report, Rev. Matthew Harrison

Highlights: Rev. Harrison expressed his thankfulness for Rev. Zagore and his work leading the Office of National Mission (ONM). He had positive remarks for the inaugural Making Disciples for Life conference, specifically noting that there was an entire second conference worth of people who requested to attend. This is a very promising project which is filling a need the people of the Synod have requested.

The Council of Presidents is unified and the Synod is calm. We continue to face demographic challenges. Evangelism is going well, but the challenge is enormous. There are financial pressures on the CUS, but they continue to work to find ways to work around those challenges, specifically with online programs. The position of LCMS Chief Financial Officer is in the process of being filled.

The Office of International Mission (OIM) is fairly calm. The challenge is that there are hundreds of people in the field and only twelve support staff in the IC for them all.

The question was posed as to whether or not the IC staff is spread too thin after many financial cuts over the last years. The Synod is in a good financial position due to the debt being retired, but we can't get ourselves into a bad situation.

Discussion occurred regarding church planting. We need to move past old programs, and healthy congregations need to assist in birthing new congregations. Real conversations need to happen in regard to joining congregations together for the purpose of mission.

They are working on addressing clergy supply. A Schwan grant and a grant from the BOD will assist in finding the initial and meaningful points of contact for individuals who want to study to become pastors. We want to know how to get Lutherans into the Concordia University System and mentor those future leaders to raise them up.

Chief Mission Officer Report, Rev. Kevin Robson

See attached report. Highlights: The board heard detailed information regarding the church worker recruitment initiative, also addressed by Rev. Harrison. There are two threads to this, first that research will be done to see how students are positively influenced and negatively hindered from entering educational settings towards church work. They are looking for a minimum of 500 responses from church workers and youth of the synod. Secondly, work will be done with a St. Louis firm to provide resources to all stakeholders and influencers to really get this in front of the church in a big way, both at the congregation and the household level. Goals and metrics will be based on the first round of research. This issue is critical. We are currently seeing 1/3 of the enrollment seminaries saw a decade ago.

Mission Advancement will be undergoing an extensive review from an outside firm. Initial review shows that they are keeping to a totally appropriate ratio of cost vs. dollar raised. Budget prep cycle is in full force. All non-profits, country-wide, are seeing a drop in revenue, even though the economy is in a boom cycle. The LCMS is superb at retaining donors, but we need new ones.

The board was encouraged to hear of the work being done in the OIM. There are 120 deployed career missionaries. What used to take about eighteen months of fundraising is now taking four-five. But all of these missionaries are being supported by twelve full time staff members at the IC, which is simply too thin. Various staffing changes are taking place to assist with this. The board received an update on the international schools in Asia.

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

See attached report. Highlights: The board heard a report on the initial Making Disciples for Life conference. It went very well and the ONM learned a considerable amount. There was a great turnout and response. Ultimately, the ONM wanted to provide feedback loops from the people of the Synod, and they got them. There are many areas of work ahead of us. Congregations need to work together; SPMs are hurting both in numbers and in care; biblical teaching is becoming increasingly attacked and congregation members are not as traditional in their beliefs as they once were; we need to move from institutional survival to an engagement in the mission of the church. The next MDFL will take place in April in Fort Wayne (in conjunction with the Disaster Response conference); September in St. Louis (in conjunction with the RSO and leadership track conference); and January in Chicago (in conjunction with the Chicago Life March).

Some staffing updates: Rev. Sean Daenzer accepted the call to be Worship Director and Chaplain of the IC. Rev. Rob Wurst is the new Director of Disaster Training. He will get a handle on what our training is and track our trained volunteers. The ONM is working with contractors in Stewardship, Rural and Small Town Ministry (RSTM), and Specialized Pastoral Ministry (SPM). There are various vacancies as well and the ONM is working to break down the walls in the office to help with collaboration.

Break

Reporting template:

A template was presented for ministry program directors to use in reporting to the board. A motion to adopt the presented form was made by Ms. Claussen. Rev. Bender seconded.

The board discussed various aspects of the template and how much should be reported from each program director.

The board entered and came out of an executive session.

Friendly amendments were made to the template to reflect the following changes.

1. Please provide a brief summary of the work of the program ministry over the last quarter.
2. Which policies of the Board for National Mission currently affect the work the program ministry is accomplishing?
3. What plans does this program ministry have for the future (over the next quarter, year, and/or in the current triennium) under the mission and ministry emphases adopted by the national convention (bylaw 3.8.2)?
4. How do these plans relate to specific policies established by the Board for National Mission?
5. Are there any policies of the Board for National Mission for which you wish to provide feedback?

The board discussed how different ministry areas can find themselves within the policies. For instance, Stewardship is not named specifically but can find the work that it does within many of the policies presented.

Ms. Claussen moved to table discussion. Rev. Taylor seconded. The motion passed.

Break for Lunch

Continued discussion of the reporting template and how our ends policies relate.

Office of National Mission Program Ministry Presentations:

Mrs. Rebecca Schmidt, Director of School Ministry

Mrs. Schmidt presented various statistics and resources that School Ministry offers. Of interest, she shared that 65% of students at LCMS schools are non-Lutheran or non-Churched. And this is across the country, not just in the “saltwater districts” as it may have been in the past. The mission field is huge among both students and educators! SLED is in its 19th cycle and working to keep the cost down with various grants.

Mrs. Schmidt educated us on Lutheran School Consulting Services that they offer, but many schools wait until it's too late. They are working to get the resources out earlier.

Rev. Mark Kiessling, Director of Youth Ministry

Rev. Kiessling presented the board with copies of Relationships Count: Engaging & Retaining Millennials. This was the product of the massive 2017 Millennial survey that was completed by the office. The office is reimagining the concept of the LYF (Lutheran Youth Fellowship) to be more of a Catechetical teaching focusing on the building blocks of the faith. These new concepts are also bringing fresh eyes into the prep for the Houston NYG in 2022.

Lutheran Young Adult Corp is moving into its next season in Detroit, St. Louis, and Milwaukee in the summer. It's growing.

Rev. Kiessling spoke to the Seven Practices of Healthy Youth Ministry. Interesting, and challenging, statistics show that the LCMS is actually quite good at retaining youth into high school, but that we lose them after they graduate. One-fifth of baptized infants remain in the church into adulthood. These statistics assist us in understanding the mission in front of us.

Resolution 4-04A Committee Report, Mrs. Hack Broome and Rev. Bender

The joint BNM/BIM committee met via conference call three times to bring the work into focus. The purpose is to bring the mission priorities and emphases into focus in front of the congregations in order to shape their work to do in the future. This will include a mailer (sent in January), catechetical statements, and bible studies.

This committee is working to create a document which explains the process of something becoming a mission priority or emphasis in the Synod. It will facilitate an hour discussion to get the conversation started at a congregational or circuit level. What do the seven mission priorities mean? How are they used by the mission boards (ends policy development, and what is that?)? If a congregation/circuit/district would like to participate in shaping these, here's how...

This won't just foster the work on future mission priorities, but really embed what is happening currently in the Synod.

The second assignment for the committee will be to assess the current seven mission priorities and create a joint report with the BIM for the 2022 convention.

Break

Rev. Sean Daenzer, Director of Worship and IC Chaplain was Introduced after being installed the previous day.

Theological Presentation: Discipleship, Rev. Kevin Robson

Rev. Robson presented a theological discussion on the concept of Discipleship. It was thoughtful and well received. Concepts discussed: the relationship between discipleship and the church's mission; the relationship between a master and disciple; tradition and the means of grace; the OT and NT occurrences of the term "disciple" (it is not really present in the OT and frequent in the NT); Jesus' initiating of the relationship.

2019 BNM Convention Resolutions

Rev. Zagore went through various resolutions from the 2019 convention that impact the work of the ONM and what is being done to respond to them. Statements of note: In regard to church planting, even when the church plant fails, the planting congregation grows by 24%. The MDFL conferences will respond to many resolutions throughout their life span. The office is responding to needs as best as they are able.

We adjourned for the evening with early evening prayer at 5:00 pm.

February 6, 2020

Hilton St. Louis Airport Hotel

Opening Prayer

The meeting was called to order by the chairman at 8:05 am. Rev. Droegemueller led us in Morning Prayer.

Continued discussion on the ONM Director Reporting Discussion and Self Governance Policy

Ms. Claussen moved to open the discussion back up again. Mrs. Hack Broome seconded. Motion passed.

A due date will be added to the reporting template.

Discussion on procedure took place. The appropriate place for this procedure to live is the self-governance policies. Individual members should not approach the program directors for more information once reports are received; that communication should go through the Unit Executive. Ends policy review will still be included in the meeting agenda with a shortened period of time as per our self-governance policies in order to review them as a whole, but time will also

be included to actually monitor the reports with each liaison taking care to ensure their area is in compliance.

How might the board encourage specific work and/or staffing to be done? According to the Synod Bylaws, we can put an overture together before the convention including the actual work that is being completed, and the work that needs to be done but cannot be done without staffing.

Break

The board updated their self-governance policies to reflect the new reporting procedure, adding bylaws 2.3.6.1-5 and 2.3.8.1.1-2. Rev. Bender moved to accept the changes and Ms. Hack Broome seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Board Member Reports on Conferences Attended

Making Disciples for Life, Revs. Briel and Taylor - The initial conference was filled with excitement and energy. Registrants wanted answers on “how to save my church” and wanted to know what resources were available. The ONM has received much appreciated feedback and will implement it moving forward with other conferences.

Rural Small Town Ministry, Ms. Claussen - The material presented at this conference is really helpful across the board, not just for RSTM churches. Tough questions are being answered (drug abuse, church closings, distances between people, “Brain Gain” cultural differences). A very favorable review.

2019 National Youth Gathering recap meeting, Ms. Claussen - There were many wonderful things that occurred at the NYG, including some baptisms! The gathering being in the midwest brought many midwest congregations there, which was part of the intention. The breakouts were received very well. Challenges included mainly logistical issues (downtown restaurants and parking, etc). Ms. Claussen expressed her thankfulness for her time serving as a liaison for the office of Youth ministry.

Foundation Board Report, Mrs. Hack Broome

The LCMS Foundation annual members’ meeting was held in Houston in November. The Foundation is funding good work and managing donated funds well. BNM board member on the Foundation Board of Trustees, Carol Hack Broome, has been asked and has agreed to chair the Membership Committee of the Foundation board. Hence she is requesting suggestions of names for consideration—qualifications being: An active member in good standing of an LCMS congregation, and a background or experience in finance, management, and/or fund development.

Other Matters

The board entered and came out of an executive session. The board would like direction from Rev. Dr. Sias regarding what public actions are appropriate for us to take as a board.

Third party letter from Rev. Rob Jarvis was tabled until Rev. Dr. Espinosa can be present.

Future Theological Presentations - The board was presented with fifteen different topics to be considered as theological presentations over the current triennium. Each member of the board will have 20 points to give out among the fifteen topics. Mrs. Sanchez will act as the facilitator of this process in order to determine which topics for which we will receive presentations. We will both invite guests and handle some of them internally.

Next Meeting: June 4 & 5, 2020; Rev. Peter Bender will be the Chaplain.

Closing Devotion led by Rev. Droegemueller.

Ms. Claussen moved to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Milas seconded. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm.