July 8, 2014
Governing Board Webinar: Envisioning MCC in 2025
Panelist Rev. Aaron Miller, reflection notes

Good morning and may I say "thank you" to the Governing Board for this invitation and opportunity to dream MCC.

My approach: provide assumptions, our theology, then the organization needed to support that theology.

1. ASSUMPTIONS – in the year 2025

- Technology is available to everyone such that connection is possible between all people – just as there is access to the robust MCC church platform via the internet
- There are full equal rights for all sexualities and genders, including full marriage equality, in the US. Internationally, there is still work to do
- There are now differently defined 'others'
- Religious institutions continue to discriminate against its perceived transgressors
- The unchurched, and post-church now represent the majority and for those who are believers, spirituality is valued over and against religion

2. OUR Theology (is spiritual not religious)

BE LOVE (how we treat one another)
BE LOVED (how WE are treated)
BE MCC (defines who we are a part of)

- MCC's theology is simple yet profound. All is rooted in God's unconditional love. Love impassions our work, Love nurtures us, and we are known as an example of it.
- MCC has replaced its Statement of Faith and Doctrines with GUIDING BELIEFS AND FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES to fully open its doors -- by eliminating language and practices that became counterintuitive to full inclusion
    - Guiding beliefs stem from Matthew 22: 37-40 when Jesus provided the two greatest commandments. The first "**Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind**".and the second "**Love your neighbor as yourself**."
    - Foundational principles stem from Micah 6:8 --- **"To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."**
- MCC is without borders. ALL are invited and warmly welcomed, without condition or exception and we offer the gift of hospitality, and a place for spiritual awakening and liberation.
- The church is now the church universal and virtual that it may reach all people and cultures and all people and cultures may connect with and through MCC

3. ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT TO THIS THEOLOGY

Governance:
All governance reflects a diverse cross-section and includes a global perspective

There is an Executive Committee, comprised of the denomination's Moderator and its chief officers, Financial, Operating, Technology, and Ministry-- providing the highest level of leadership, accountability, support, and oversight.

Reporting to the EC is the Governing Board and the Council of Ministry.

The Governing Board is comprised of clergy and lay members and is responsible for the denomination's administrative ministry that includes policy and procedures as well as financial and strategic planning.

The Council of Ministry is comprised of Elders responsible for oversight of key and specific ministry areas, such as:

- Church integration of technology
- Education (Christian and other)
- Leadership Development and Preparation for Ministry
- Justice
- Stewardship
- Church planting

Elders report to the Executive Committee to/through the Executive Committee member who is responsible for that particular ministry area. Each elder also functions as liaison to/for a specific local church, partner, or affiliate.

All licensed active clergy are required to serve in at least one denominational-level ministry area, where spiritually gifted and called by God. If clergy is not serving as pastor of a local church or acting as an affiliate lead, clergy is then designated as a resource in the local community to meet the particular spiritual needs of that community, as needed and as appropriate.

Lay Leadership has been increased and is developed and trained to provide the additional support necessary to ensure the local and virtual church community is provided the services and resources needed, as appropriate.

<u>2 TYPES OF MCC PRESENCE</u>:

1. **TANGIBLE PRESENCE**
   - Qualifying viable church plants, partners, and affiliates is ongoing—and producing a growth rate of 10% average additional MCC locations per year. This widens the foundational base necessary to support MCC's ministry and its offerings, locally and virtually
   - All Sacraments and Rites are offered
   - The local church, at times, acts as a sponsor for fledgling start ups

2. **VIRTUAL PRESENCE THAT IS INTERACTIVE**
   - Where Tangible Presence ends, virtual presence begins.
   - All people have access to the church platform via the internet, where seekers may find:
     1. Resources, such as:
        - Educational
        - Worship-related
        - Bible commentaries
        - Archive of Sermon videos
     2. Worship access
        - Guests may select and attend worship services, made available by various churches, weekly---through LIVE streaming
        - Guests can choose to attend healing services and other special services, when made available
        - Guests may chose to interact with worship, healing or special services, made possible through web portals to the local church and managed by the local church—for prayer requests and other requests
     3. Sacraments and Rites
        - One may participate in Holy Communion and be Baptized remotely, when desired and appropriate
        - Rites may be performed by local clergy or through live feed when appropriate
        - Baptism is no longer required for local church membership, so as not to exclude.
     4. Opportunities are created for web-based fellowship -- in a variety of ways and to meet specific need and to deepen personal connection and sense of belonging

THE GOAL
Is to receive and serve all seekers---without qualifiers and without exception. We meet seekers where they are with what they need. Creating an opportunity for a meaningful spiritual connection that respects, affirms, and transforms those who are unchurched, those who are post-church, and all who have been disenfranchised. This is done through local and virtual church, an intentional community with true universal fellowship

MCC is a church without borders that LIVES and GIVES God's unconditional love.

BE LOVE.
BE LOVED.
BE MCC TOO.