

Two Micah Board Members.... Sharing

By: Harry Harder and Blake Sittler

Harry:

Micah Mission is an ecumenical organization of various Christian denominations. Different denominations have different strengths and in a group such as Micah those differing abilities can complement each other. For instance, I represent Mennonite Church Saskatchewan. I would characterize the Mennonite approach to doing social service work as “lighting candles in the darkness”. Mennonites are a small group and build models and examples, and hopefully if enough people follow, a difference can be made. But, “setting the world on fire” is beyond our imagining.



Catholics on the other hand, are used to being a majority, or a very significant minority, in society. They build their own hospitals and educational systems. Size does not intimidate Catholics. They have the contacts, resources, and attitude to make things happen. When Catholics begin something they expect the whole world to follow. Mennonites suggest that we try some modest fundraising. Catholics suggest establishing an endowment fund that will take care of our needs into the foreseeable future.

It is obvious that our members bring gifts to our board table that have been nurtured in their own faith traditions. There are different ways of worship and praying, organizational structure, methods of decision making, and networks and connections to our communities. These methods and approaches complement each other in our common purpose at the Micah Mission and make us better than we are by ourselves. It is a privilege to work together in such a group.

Harry and Blake:

The mission overwhelms our reality! We have this group of Christians who are unified in a vision so beautiful that it walks effortlessly around our differences. Sara Miles, in her book *Take This Bread*, writes from the perspective of a radically left-leaning, lesbian Christian who visits in a prison alongside a radically right-leaning conservative Christian; they could not agree on anything theologically but they were bound together in their outreach to the prisoners. When one of them offered the other a stick of gum, they recognized the Eucharistic implications of serving in communion.

Blake:

In the past, missionary Christians pierced the “New World” (more accurately, a very ancient world of many nations) and swung the double-edged sword of the gospel. Their intention was to spread the truth of the gospel because it was their biblical mandate.



We now live in a world where the sword is dull and the modern armour is thick. We must now evangelize, not through the power and force of the truth of the gospel, but through the warmth and attractiveness of the beauty of a relationship with God. Pope Francis preaches and lives this approach as he was inspired by Hans Urs von Balthasar who said that when it comes to sharing our experience of God, “love alone is credible”.

Every day, the Micah Mission lives out the beauty of the gospel by making time to journey with people who are utterly alone due to the nature of their crimes. We do not befriend them out of naïveté, but out of an insight inspired by the Holy Spirit and with a strength that only Christ can guide.

Every time we meet, I am inspired by the efforts of my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. The efforts of our many denominations are indeed flavoured with the charisms of our various theologies but those differences in perspective do not divide our desire to, in the words of C.S. Lewis, “become little Christs”.