



629 Crescent Drive  
PO Box 564  
Hesston, KS 67062-0564  
Tel: 620-327-4187  
Email: scc@sccmenno.org

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Over the past few months, I have had discussions with several individuals about the Discovery 20.21 process. These discussions typically centered around “South Central Mennonite Conference” leaving MCUSA. I find it amazing that this is the universal understanding, as that is **not** a good description of the Discovery 20.21 process in my judgement.

Over the past few years, SCMC under the direction of Tim Swiegart, has been working through finding out who we are as a conference. We have discussed things like “What tasks should SCMC be undertaking” and “How should we be doing them”. The Discovery 20.21 process is really the final part of that process. This is the restart ... the reboot of the system:

*“Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, [we] press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called [us] heavenward in Christ Jesus” Phil 3:13-14*

Many of our churches have been part of SCMC for over 100 years. In those churches, the people who made the decision to join SCMC are all gone. What is left is their legacy. But legacy is not what God calls us to. “Being Religious” is exactly what Jesus criticized. We are called to action. We are called to Ministry. We are called to be missionaries! In order to do that, we must listen to the leading of the Holy Spirit:

*The LORD said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by. Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” 1 Kings 19: 11-13*

Too many times, we just continue to do what we have always done because we don’t have time or inclination to determine where God is leading. It takes time. It takes commitment. But without that guidance, we operate on our own understanding, in our own strength, relying on our flawed human preferences. Instead, we must pray continually, we must listen carefully for the gentle whisper. Then we must act, depending upon God to provide the wisdom, the ability and the resources to accomplish what we cannot do on our own, but **ONLY He** can do through us ... for His Glory.

The Discovery 20.21 process is the time for your congregation to listen to the gentle whisper of the Holy Spirit. Determine where he is leading you and your congregation. Take your time. Listen. Discern what you are to do as a congregation and how you are to do it. There are no shackles of the past that are holding you. There is only the promise of the Love of God, satisfaction of obedience to Him and the Glory of God Almighty on his throne.

How does SCMC fit into that ministry? How does MCUSA fit into that ministry? This is the goal of Discovery 20.21. Discern carefully. Listen to the still small whisper. Then, Act. The time is short.

*The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:9*

I pray that the decisions we make will not be made by gauging what we are against and what we are for, but rather where the God of the Universe is leading us.

-Gary Wolfer

SCMC Network Chair