
DIACONAL MINISTRIES CANADA

2021 – STRATEGIC PLAN

(with Covid in mind)

(Based on the DMC Board meetings held on October 15-16, 2020)

Background and Process Overview

At its February 2020 meeting, the board of Diaconal Ministries Canada (DMC) agreed to hire Aileen Van Ginkel to lead a Communal Discernment (Strategic Planning) discussion, to be based on the results of a national survey of Canadian Christian Reformed Church deacons. This survey was to be conducted during the spring of 2020. Then Covid-19 hit. And DMC's long-term plans were put on hold as we worked to provide for the immediate needs of deacons and churches.

In June 2020, the idea of holding a different kind of planning process was proposed and, as a result, in July 2020, members of the DMC Board conducted a telephone survey of diaconal board chairs. The goal of these calls was to provide information which could be used as guidance for an online discernment process that would result in:

- clarification of the ends to which the DMC Board will hold DMC Staff accountable
- the development of a one-year plan for DMC.

After the phone survey was concluded, Board Chair Erica Snippe-Juurakko summarized the survey results which were used to guide a series of facilitated conversations on October 15-17, 2020. These conversations, held via Zoom, were attended by DMC Board members, DMC National Director Ron Vanden Brink, and three DMC staff members. The guided conversations followed a process of:

- sharing impactful Scripture passages that were related to the work at hand
- reviewing themes emerging from the phone survey
- brainstorming ways to move from the current reality into the future
- designing ways to move ahead along those directions

Coach-facilitator Aileen Van Ginkel worked with Ron and Erica in drafting the survey, designing the conversations, facilitating and recording the conversations, and reporting on the outcomes (see Appendix 1 - FINAL REPORT, Discernment in Planning (A. Van Ginkel, November 6, 2020)).

At the end of the final discernment session, it was decided that DMC staff, via its National Director, would present the Board-proposed wording of Board Ends and a plan for implementing them.

Some Key Learnings from the Discernment Process

- **God is Faithful.** It is important that the Diaconal Ministries Board and Staff maintain a posture of trusting God's faithfulness. *Keep praying for this ministry!*
- **Communal Discernment.** It is important to continue providing opportunities for Board members and Staff to discern/consider together matters that go beyond the normal "business" of the organization. It would be great if these conversations gave special attention to the future of the organization.
- **Administrative Understanding.** Occasionally there is a disconnect between what the DMC staff does and what the DMC Board thinks they do and/or thinks they should do.
- **Gift Discovery.** Discovering our gifts and using them for the benefit of others needs to continue to be an essential part of the CRC's Diaconal efforts in Canada.
- **On-Line Presence.** Continuing to offer as much information and training "on-line" as possible (e.g. social media, website, short videos, webinars, workshops, zoom events) is strategically important.
- **Coaches.** Even during this challenging time, the role of the DMC coaches and the personal relationships they have (can develop) with diaconates is critically important. Recruiting and training coaches (paying them better?) needs to be a priority.
- **Best Practices.** Helping new deacons understand their roles and providing stories around best practices continues to be an important part of what DMC is called to do.
- **Justice.** This is an important part of the work of DMC and focusing on it can help connect youth to the role of Deacons.
- **Stories.** Sharing positive stories is a great way to encourage, motivate and inspire people to take action. Sharing stories can also help raise DMCs profile and its fundraising efforts.
- **Collaboration.** DMC needs to continue to lead by example in this area (e.g. working with World Renew and Christian Stewardship Services).
- **Financial Stability.** Developing a strategy for financial sustainability is very important. Exclusively relying on "dues" and "offerings" will not allow future growth.

Stepping into the Future ~ based on the “Final Report” from Aileen Van Ginkel

⇒ **D(d)eacons**

- Develop (online) networks of Deacons. Help them share stories and best practices. With a local focus, encourage them to work together.
- Encourage spiritual growth! Continue to develop great resources for book studies, devotions and spiritual disciplines.
- Develop online training modules including: Gift Discovery and Volunteer Management.
- Help churches understand that those who are already doing diaconal work are deacons! Encourage ordaining them.
- Ensure that every diaconate is aware of the coaching that is available to them.

⇒ **Coaches**

- Continue to enhance the role of coaches – their visibility and effectiveness – expand skill development especially in the use of technology.
- Provide online training modules including: Gift Discovery and Volunteer Management.
- Encourage coaches to connect with youth, especially those involved in justice issues.
- Include some fundraising and advancement work in this role. This does not have to be onerous – it can be as simple as explaining that their presence is a result of a church paying its DMC dues.

⇒ **Youth**

- Develop a way to help youth understand diaconal work. Perhaps develop a guide for connecting diaconal work with justice (*To act justly, to love faithfulness, and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8*).
- Work towards having more young adults become Deacons. *Perhaps develop some educational material around this.*

⇒ **DMC Staff**

- Continue to grow spiritually via book studies, devotions and spiritual disciplines.
- Consider redeveloping the Day of Encouragement. *Note: Pre-Covid, hosting updated regional events was being discussed with World Renew.*
- Recruit more coaches.
- Work some form of fundraising and advancement into everyone’s role.
- Develop a comprehensive fundraising plan.
- Weave a goal of inspiring people to follow their callings (i.e. use of gifts) into everyone’s work.
- Continue to develop the Stewardship Project.
- Continue to find ways to share information with board members.

⇒ **DMC Board**

- Continue to grow spiritually via book studies, devotions and spiritual disciplines.
- Advancement: promote the work of DMC as much as possible.
- Fundraising: include some form of fundraising into board members' role.

A. Stepping into the Future

Keeping our vision statement in mind

***Diaconal Ministries Canada exists to inspire, empower, and equip deacons
as they animate their churches
to join in God's transforming work in communities across Canada.***

Primary Focuses for this Season... *These are intended as "special focus items"; regular work will continue as normally as possible.*

God is Faithful

Gift Discovery & Spiritual Growth

DMC staff
Coaches
Board members and
Deacons

to grow spiritually via book studies,
devotions and spiritual disciplines.

1. **DMC will provide and discuss 2 books**

- *Everywhere you Look* by Tim Soerens. This book will help us see how God's Spirit is working in ourselves and our neighbourhoods – and how we can join Him.
- *The Power of Asset Mapping* by Luther Snow. Starting with our personal Assets (gifts) this very practical book guides us into understanding that our gifts are more valuable when we connect them with the gifts of others. We move beyond charity to community partnerships.

2. **DMC will develop a new set of**

Devotions for Deacons called *Overcoming Roadblocks in Ministry*. While targeting Deacons, these will be useful for us all. (*The first devotion in this set was published on Jan. 13, 2021.*)

Board

1. **Advancement.** Develop ways in which board members can promote DMC in more concrete ways.
2. **Fundraising.** Continue to develop ways in which board members can assist in raising funds.

Coaches

Coaches are a key part of our organization

1. **Zoom.** Host monthly “just in time learning” zoom sessions with coaches. These will focus on best practices and effectiveness training.
2. **Youth.** Continue to explore ways to connect with young adults. Ongoing conversations with Youth Ministries and Faith Formation. Encourage coaches to promote the youth justice grant.
3. **Fundraising & Advancement.** Develop and share some basic resources for use by coaches.
4. **Compensation & Recruitment.** Host a conversation with coaches about their compensation package, and best ways to recruit new coaches.

DMC Staff

Staff work is sprinkled throughout every part of this plan but some special emphasis will be given to...

1. **Stories.** Continue to share inspiring stories – best practices etc.
2. **New Ground.** Reemphasize this program. Recruit a point person and enhance our strategy of ABCD, coaching, storytelling. Incorporate advancement and fundraising into this work.
3. **Day(s) of Encouragement.** Explore the possibility of National DOE type events. *Perhaps in cooperation with World Renew.*
4. **Stewardship Pilot Project.**
5. **Coaches.** Recruiting and specialized training. (See above.)
6. **On The Same Page.** Explore ways to help “close the perceived disconnect” between the Staff and the Board.

Fundraising & Advancement

Some of this is sprinkled through various other parts of this plan...

1. **Fundraising.** Continue to develop a comprehensive fundraising plan. *Note that this has been in development for a number of years. We have recently begun working with an experienced fundraiser (2 hours a week) who also works with World Renew.*

B. Communal Discernment

Include a “Communal Discernment” discussion as part of the next 4 board meetings.

An important matter for the Board and the Staff to discern/consider together. A subject that goes beyond the normal business of the organization.

- The DMC National Director in cooperation with the Board Executive will chose a relevant discussion topic.
- All DMC Board members and staff will be encouraged to participate in a guided discussion on the chosen topic.

After 4 discussion – the process will be reviewed...