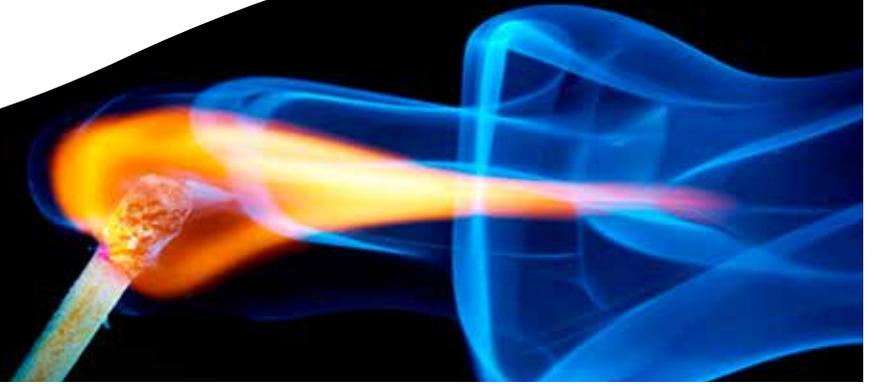




Mennonite
Mission
Network

MDI



Resource meeting #5

Where have you fallen short this week?

Meeting time: 1 hour and 15 minutes

Participants: Anyone participating in a Missional Discipleship Group (MDG)

Purpose: To hear stories of transformation and to further resource participants.

Agenda

A. Listen: What is God doing in our Missional Discipleship Groups? —35 minutes

- Scripture reading
- Prayer
- Accountability

B. Resourcing: Where have you fallen short this week? —35 minutes

Background

Most probably in reaction to a Roman Catholic understanding of the Christian faith, other streams coming from the 16th-century Reformation have dismissed the idea of “*confession of sin*” altogether. “Only to God,” we say, “will I ever confess my sins; it’s nobody else’s business.” This might very well be a classic case of one “throwing out the baby with the bath water.”

Confession of sins to one another, however, seemed to have been a common practice within disciples of Jesus in the early church. The *Didache*, a church document dated about 70 A.D., says, “Confess your sins in church, and do not go up to your prayer with an evil conscience. This is the way of life . . . on the Lord’s Day gather together, break bread and give thanks, after confessing your transgressions, so that your sacrifice may be pure” (*Didache* 4:14,14:1).

In the book of James (James 5:16) we also find a direct allusion on this important practice: “Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.”

The practice of confession of sin very quickly in church history (third century A.D.) became a prerogative of those in leadership positions (i.e., bishops and priests). This does not negate its intrinsic power to keep our lives walking in the light of Jesus, to provide accountability with one another, and to build a stronger community of disciples.

1 John 1:5-9: "This is the message we heard from Jesus and now declare to you: 'God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all. So we are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual darkness; we are not practicing the truth. *But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.* If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.'"

Three reasons why this question is important

- 1. To keep us in the light:** As the 1 John passage above says, "God is light;" therefore, God's children are to live in the same way: in the light of Jesus! Or as Peter would say, "... *for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light*" (1 Peter 2:9b).
- 2. To stimulate accountability:** A very practical way of living "in the light" is by learning the discipline of "confession of sin" to one another. Repentance is NOT only a personal business with God. For repentance to rend its fruits, it needs to be shared with other disciples for accountability purposes. As John would say above: "... *then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.*"
- 3. To build community:** If we learn to "live in the light" as John would say above, "*then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.*"

C. Prayer: Pray that God's Spirit would help us see our sin and to repent from it. —5 minutes