

MSSA Business Meeting Notes
Oct 2015

Attending: Ryan Cragun, Kristen Black, Mary McNamara, Michael Nielson, Armand Mauss, David Knowlton, Rick Phillips, Ram Cnaan, Christine Cusack, Jason Palmer, Henri Gooren, Matt Evans, Joshua Larkin, Gordon Shepherd, David Heap, Mike Newchester, Mike Abel, Steven Smith, Carrie Miles

David: opening remarks about MSSA history and activities

Introductions of attendees

Ryan:

- Financial report. About \$2100 in the bank (correction on 11/3/2015: we had about \$2,500; after paying the honorarium for the Vernon Lecture, it's now about \$2,000). No more newsletter, just announcements through the mail. Just less than 50 dues paying members. About 30 lapsed that could come back. Easiest to pay via paypal via MSSA website.
- Review of ask an expert feature on website

David: Discussion of how to increase membership. How to create excitement about MSSA? Some projects have been started.

Kris: Reports on possible blog but Kristen reported that she and Rick thought podcast might be better. Looking for 20 min podcast. Available from MSSA site. Called "The Supper Club." Catching up with people in the field, what they are doing. Nobody has turned her down for interviews.

Some discussion.

- how do we advertise it? get it on itunes, stitcher, post on facebook, twitter.
- Should we get a twitter feed? Or is Instagram better? Christine willing to do twitter for MSSA.
- Concern that just tweeting might not be so effective. Need to be active on blogs and other feeds.
- Have someone designated to contact those on the program that might be interested in MSSA. Ryan said he'd do it.
- Maybe liveblogging. Combined with more photos taken and Instagram.

Rick: report on a journal. Some pros of having a journal, e.g., can just write to audience familiar with LDS. Rick talked to those that run small societies/journals to get lots of details. They were unanimous in advice to not do it. Standard model of regular issues will not work. Another model is to have an edited volume/occasional papers series when they have enough material. Maybe called "Annals of the MSSA" or something. Print on demand has many advantages. So we could call for papers on certain themes. Another idea is classic reprints, like Vernon's book, or older studies of Mormon life.

Some discussion

- Different from dialogue because some quantitative work can go into one of these volumes.
- Open access model. Digital commons.
- What about whether those publications count for tenure? Young scholars might not get credit for promotion. Young scholars need to be aware of what will get counted.
- Journal "Religions" offers special issues. Maybe do one on Mormonism. Other journals like "Voluntaristic Review" want much longer papers, 60-100 papers.
- There would need to be a peer-review process. Maybe the current MSSA board would be editorial

board. Maybe by-laws would need to be revised.

- Concern about occasional papers copyright. MSSA would have copyright to volume, but authors would have copyright to paper. Maybe require membership dues to publish. But what about republication of same paper somewhere else? Seems to be agreement that it would be OK unless second journal would not allow it.
- There is lot of work that is done but never published. This would be a venue.

Motion: for Rick to pursue this and present a formal recommendation to MSSA for a future publication by MSSA. Motion was seconded and approved by near-unanimous vote.

David: another idea to have presidential election in every other year opposite Vernon lecture.

Discussion:

- some concern expressed about getting new leadership. Need to get organization going with more people, rather than have just three people doing everything.
- Hard to get volunteers. By-laws allow for person to serve as president more than once, but not in successive terms. But nobody has served more than once as president.
- We have stable membership size but disinterest in serving as officers.
- May need to have people serve as officers multiple times.

Motion: for committee to consider revisions to by-laws, including changing in term structure for officers. Seconded. Near unanimous. Rick and Ryan and David to help on this committee.

David: concern that there is declining interest in MSSA. Armand had proposed ways to draw in members. Maybe build a center.

Discussion:

- Could do a conference separate from SSSR. Maybe in Utah where there are lots of people.
- SSSR is not as great a place for non-sociologists.
- Maybe go to MHA or CGU or UVU to do a MSSA conference and get a wider audience.
- Question about how big the target population is.
- Want to keep ties with SSSR but maybe branch out to do more.

David: closing remarks.