

MFC Liaison Report
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When I served as one of the MFC Liaisons to Candidates in March, 2017, I witnessed a thoughtful, reflective and respectful interview process: one I believe could contribute significantly to the ministry of each candidate we met. No matter what “number” anyone received from the panel, each candidate received interview questions and follow-up comments that highlighted their particular strengths and areas for growth. Serving as Liaison shed light on my own emerging ministry, and I hope that my brief reflections here will be helpful to candidates preparing to see the MFC.

My own interview took place in October, 2015, and I served as Liaison with several ministers who had interviewed me. While at first this was disconcerting (prompting memories of my own nervousness and stumbled-over answers) it helped me to truly understand that the members of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee are, themselves, people! Although we all know that no two ministers are alike, serving as MFC Liaison really brought that home for me.

We all have their own strengths and weaknesses, tendencies and preferences, stemming from our own unique backgrounds and experiences of UU ministry. Each of us on the panel experienced the candidates from our own personal perspectives, and so, at times there were significant differences of opinion. Yet, because of the MFC’s deep commitment to the democratic process and to consensus, there was a net benefit to the candidates. In my observation, our process put the best interests of the candidates at the forefront of the interview and assessment experience.

The MFC was focused and intentional in its process, working with grace and good humour despite a full schedule and time pressure. Each candidate received the panel’s wholehearted presence and attention, and we gathered in prayer before welcoming each candidate, reminding ourselves that we are part of a larger web of interdependent Wholeness that embraces us all. Over the two and a half days of interviews, I observed a genuine desire on the part of the MFC to truly see all of the candidates, to honour and affirm their unique gifts, and to encourage them to bring their whole selves to the interview and to ministry.

A few additional thoughts, for those preparing for MFC interviews. When you preach, I hope you’ll try (as much as is possible under the circumstances) to imagine your MFC panel as a small congregation. Like any congregation, the MFC is seeking strength, courage, inspiration and genuine wisdom. When you’re answering the questions, I’d encourage you to reveal your true self, which may require revealing your own vulnerability at times. Stay grounded in the sources of spiritual strength that called you to ministry, as well as the knowledge that will give your ministry authority. Refer to, illuminate and reveal those sources during your interview and stand strong in your commitment to offer ministry the world needs now. Your appointment with the MFC is an important opportunity to affirm that commitment and to reveal the religious understanding at its heart, while also providing the panel an opportunity to assess your knowledge and skills.

Blessings on your journey to ministry!