



Conference Pastor Report

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We belong to a Christian denomination of courageous pioneers who were ready to die for the sake of following Christ. In the early days of the radical reformation it was common for Anabaptist believers to face interrogation, torture and death by drowning or burning because of their beliefs. Believing in a personal experience of salvation in Jesus Christ followed by adult baptism, could mean the loss of all personal possessions and death. Their response to the grace of God and to the call of Jesus Christ to “come follow me” was a costly one! As we meet at Assembly 2014 to consider what Jesus is Lord means to us, our spiritual roots inspire us to aim high – to not be afraid – to be willing to sacrifice for the sake of following Christ!

In my work as Conference Pastor I see the sacrifices that pastors and leaders make, most of the time quite joyfully, for the sake of their calling. One could say that my role is to be part of the support crew that helps church leaders pursue their church’s God given mission. Following are some of my involvements in supporting leaders:

Church Unity Project

Conflict can arise because of a spiritual issue that needs to be addressed by prayer, scripture and discipline. Many times, unnecessary or destructive conflicts in the church can be avoided by wise responses or well planned processes. The Church Unity Project is designed to resource church leaders with the best training available for developing skills in dealing with conflict. Brian Strom, Director of the Canadian Institute for Conflict Resolution, has led two equipping workshops in 2013 for MB pastors and leaders. Approximately half of MBCM Churches have participated. In 2014 we plan to offer another workshop by Dr. Strom on Designing and Leading Group Processes.

Pastors Credentialing and Commissioning

The diversity of experience and training that pastors bring to their work is vast. Differing expectations between what the congregation, the pastor and the

denomination believe a pastor’s ethics or theology should be can lead to serious ministry challenges. Provincial conference ministers have worked hard to strengthen our national credentialing standards to address these challenges. With the co-operation of church leaders, we are making progress in ensuring that all pastors who serve in a Canadian MB Church are Credentialed. In addition, our Manitoba Faith and Life Committee has invited all pastors to sign a covenant agreeing to live by our pastoral code of ethics. It gives me great joy to join churches in celebrating and commissioning the new pastors who come to serve.

Pastor Clusters

Most of the pastors of our 40 MB churches regularly meet with other like-minded pastors for prayer and for networking together. I continue to co-ordinate and meet with as many MB Pastor clusters across the province as I am able.

National Board of Faith And Life

The issues that we are dealing with as a BFL are:

- Preparing a follow-up National Study Conference to the 2013 Human Sexuality Conference held in Edmonton
- Discerning whether the 1999 MB Confession of Faith needs revision
- Addressing the wide theological diversity across the nation

My continued prayer for the MB Church in Manitoba is that increased diversity would result in growth rather than division, that pastors and church leaders would find joy in their work and that all of us would welcome the Holy Spirit to keep transforming us to become more and more like Christ.

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