



## CHURCH RELATIONS

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*So that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. (1 Corinthians 12:25-27)*

You can define community by geography: this is where I live, this is where I work. But we know it to be more than that. Community is fellowship with others; shared interests, goals, joys and sorrows. Community is sitting around the table at church potlucks, it's gathering to celebrate Advent and Easter and all the days in between.

So when MBCM labels a core service area *building community*, it could easily be read as trite and insincere. Tacking the latest buzzword onto a product offering doesn't usually instill trust. Community isn't bought or mass-produced, it's built over time and usually a result of shared circumstance or environment. What does MBCM have in common with your church family, what do we have in common with you?

For more than three years, I've struggled with being an outsider in a new land. Coming into this role from another denomination—one my family and I remain part of—puts me at a disadvantage. Yet you've accepted me all the same. Still, I wouldn't be surprised if there are some who question how an organization could assign MB church relations to an outsider. Perhaps the true test of a community's mettle is in how they welcome outsiders.

This year at Assembly 2017, MBCM will welcome 19 new churches. Most of them from different cultures: they don't look like us, they don't talk like us. And what if we don't like the strange food they bring to the potluck? Growing pains are inevitable, but we are united in Christ and Christ's body we will be.

What stories will we hear from our new friends? What stories will you tell them? MBCM needs to double its effort to tell compelling stories and share what's happening from Snow Lake to Altona and everywhere in between. So far we have been doing this through praise and prayer guides, blog posts, podcast episodes and social media. Please let me know how we could be doing better in this area.

Another major focus for us has been the redesigning of our website. Truth be told, it's been a very long process. Much of the design is complete and we are finally engaging web developers to help bring it to life. All content aligns to the four core service areas and the model is integral to the infrastructure of the new site. We envision the website being a warehouse for resources and tools, and as such we are building with scalability in mind. How can our website better serve you and your church?

How can MBCM better serve your church? We want to do more than talk about community, we want to join you in it. These are exciting times for our family of churches and I feel privileged to be a part of it. Thank you for another year of support and prayer. Good bless the MB church of Manitoba!