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Welcome to MBCM Assembly 2020! I look forward to our time collectively as we pray, worship, listen and resource one another.

Our theme this year is Reassemble, which means to gather together again or to put something back together. I believe that both definitions are beneficial for us this weekend.

As we gather, we get to know one another and build trust in community. Together we share stories of celebration and hurt. As a provincial team, we prayerfully discerned that God might be inviting us to acknowledge the challenges and affliction of the last year. We recognize that as a conference, there is a need to put things back together. We hope that this weekend will provide an opportunity for that.

Some of the challenges we as MBCM experienced are tied to the realities of the national conference. The de-merger of C2C from Multiply resulted in substantial changes for the staff of Multiply in our province. For some, this meant moving to a relational funding model. In other cases, this also led to job loss. Another outcome was the loss of relied upon funding for Manitoba church plants.

The Canadian Conference released Our Financial Story in the Fall, which provided an incredibly sobering look at past spending and decision making. We witnessed the closing of the printed MB Herald magazine, which has been a core part of our heritage as Canadian Mennonite Brethren. Consequently, MB Herald staff were released. Some of whom attend our churches - all of whom are part of our family. We all feel their loss.

We also walked through difficult matters in our churches, such as leadership failures that caused hurt to members of our community. Words such as pain, wounds and struggle could describe parts of the journey.

These aren't the only pieces of the story. However, I do believe that God invites us to pay attention to these hurts. Romans 12:12 invites us to acknowledge suffering as a part of the journey.

Yet, we are not without hope and during the times of suffering we are also called to persevere in prayer. Could I invite you to pray for the following:

- Pray for strength, vision, and courage for our Northern churches and Simonhouse Bible Camp.
- Pray for churches and rural communities as they engage in Indigenous Ministries.
- Pray that we would be united in the Spirit with patience and gentleness as we all work together.
- Pray that God would continue to reveal Christ's love to us all and that this love would then overflow to our communities.
- Pray that God would do more than we can ask or imagine to build His church.

As we reassemble, I want to thank you. Thank you for your faithfulness. Thank you for considering one another and engaging with this family of churches. Thank you for partnering and supporting one another. Thank you for your generosity as we seek to provide support, resources, and ongoing training. May God give us the courage and creativity to discover 2020 as a year of God's mercy, love, grace and truth.