

# Provincial Director Report

Welcome to MBCM Assembly 2021! Our theme this year is *Steady*.

Immovable, unshakable, safe, unchanging, constant, calm, secure.

When I reflect on the past year, words like chaos and change are the words that most quickly describe my thoughts. So why *Steady* as a theme? As we as a team prayed and discerned what might be an appropriate picture of where we have been and what is ahead, the word *steady* came to mind. Thankfully, this word doesn't depend on me or us; it is a word that turns our focus towards our God. The presence of Jesus creates steadiness in the face of unwanted change and reminds us that as we are called to make disciples, we do so with a promise that Jesus is always with us (Matthew 28:20). It also reminds us of Deuteronomy 31:8 "The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid, do not be discouraged." Our invitation for this weekend together, as well as the continued journey ahead, is to be reminded of God's steady presence. I Corinthians 15:58 "Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves

fully to the work of the Lord because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain."

I'm incredibly grateful for the generosity of our churches in 2020. Indeed a sign of God's steadiness in our lives amid much trouble and unknown. The global pandemic is something that brings us to our knees, looking to Christ for our strength and deliverance. What does it mean to be the church when it doesn't include physical gatherings when we can't meet together as the body? The church's methods have changed, yet the call to be the church, the body of Christ, remains.

Our MBCM staff team continues to work hard to serve our churches and leaders as best we can. Janelle Braun and her husband welcomed baby Callan on January 30. Congratulations to the Braun family! We will miss Janelle around the office but are excited for the Braun's family adventures ahead. Amanda Leighton has increased her time in the office from one day a week to three. She continues to provide fantastic administrative support, with Bomba Ng'andu who remains on the team two days a week, doing marvellous work in communications. George Klassen



## ASSEMBLY 2021

continues to serve on a contract basis in managing the Henderson Building. Along with Jason Dyck, it is our privilege as an MBCM staff team to seek to equip, resource, and inspire the MBCM constituency.

Every May, a highlight for many MBCM pastors has been the annual Pastors Retreat at Hecla Resort. Unfortunately, due to COVID restrictions, we will not be able to host this event in 2021. I look forward to finding ways that we will be able to be creative in connecting as we can and look forward to May 2022 with the hope of gathering once again.

### **National Strategic Plan**

I'm looking forward to 2021. Thanks to the Collaborative Model and the National Strategic Plan, each province will focus on the four strategic areas outlined – *Spiritual Health and Theology, Missions, Leadership Development, and Organizational Health* – and work together as a church conference.. In our ongoing desire to equip, resource, and inspire our churches, we look forward to creating opportunities for discussion and action plans for taking the next steps together. I will let Jason's report speak to the Spiritual Health and Theology strategic area. Over the next year, I would like to see us establish teams (groups of 4 - 8 people with expertise and interest) in each strategic area that could engage church leadership in discernment and

direction. Praying and dreaming of ways that we can work together well.

### **Leadership Development**

We have accomplished establishing a new 3-year affiliation with the MB Seminary, CCMBC, and CMU to continue offering a Manitoba Mennonite Brethren pathway in graduate-level training. Andrew Dyck and Pierre Gilbert remain as faculty in our midst and can continue to be involved in our Faith and Life Teams, preaching and teaching in churches and their ministry among students. Our goal is to continue to find the best ways to train leaders and build on our Mennonite Brethren theological convictions. Here's a link to the Regional Meeting Graduate Studies Update [RM 2020 Graduate Studies Update 1.5.pdf](#)

We recognize a need for leaders in all areas of church life. Many of our churches are doing excellent work when it comes to leadership development. In our effort to continue to foster a leadership development environment in our churches, a Leadership Development team will work to determine how we could best meet church leadership training and development needs. The team would focus on the opportunity to create leadership development within the local church by connecting with education institutions, Multiply missions training events, and starting conversations that matter along the way. The team would



## ASSEMBLY 2021

also seek to accommodate the discernment process regarding the next steps during the three-year evaluation period of the new affiliation agreement for Mennonite Brethren Graduate Training within Manitoba.

In recent months, I have had numerous conversations with young leaders who want to be more involved in conference conversations. They care about the church and desire to learn how we seek to function in a relationship as a church conference. I look forward to finding ways to encourage churches to be intentional about inviting young leaders to join and participate in our conversations.

### **Organizational health**

MBCM will be working on updating and revising our governance and bylaws over the upcoming year. We will be putting together a team of interested & capable people that could assist us in these needed updates. The MBCM board will bring these items to our Assembly 2022. We have also begun to review our HR resources (employee template agreement), communication of salary grids) as some of these documents were last updated in 2011.

Currently, we have a small team, led by Amanda that is meeting to provide review and revisions to our Safe Place Policy. After the modifications are complete, we will seek to create more resource

materials to provide churches with training their volunteers.

Along with the Safe Place Policy and the HR resources (salary grid, employee agreement templates), we would like to create board and governance resources available to share among our churches. From board orientation training to governance manuals to rental agreements, creating a place where churches could share their expertise and experiences and populate a learning library. The National Ministry Team would like to work together to share and access these resources across the provinces.

### **Missions**

#### *Indigenous Ministry*

In November of 2019, Regional Meeting participants had significant conversations regarding First Nations ministry in Manitoba. At the onset of this ministry, the aim was to fulfill three key mandates:

- 1.Plant new churches among Indigenous communities, whether urban or rural.
2. Identifying, training, and resourcing Indigenous leaders.
3. Connect MBCM churches to engage holistically with Indigenous communities.

Opportunities that continue to be available for churches are:



## ASSEMBLY 2021

- Educational awareness (teaching and preaching)
- Blanket Exercise (Canadian history role play from Indigenous lens)
- Opportunities to learn & serve – volunteer at Living Word or One88 or Freedom House.
- Resources - finances, food, clothing, supplies, etc.
- Mutual Partnership - church to church relationships

I am meeting with MultiPLY's Derek Parenteau (First Nations' Ministry), Paul Winter (Living Word Temple), Lloyd & Carol Letkeman (MultiPLY) to work towards the above mandate and opportunities for churches. We look forward to inviting churches to greater awareness and participation.

### *Discipleship*

We have people, opportunities and resources right here in Manitoba to equip us to be disciples of Jesus in our communities. For example, Lloyd & Carol Letkeman's local MultiPLY team have been effective in providing opportunities that continue to be available for churches such as:

- Training on living out the Gospel of Jesus cross-culturally & contextually,
- Orientating our everyday life to be missional
- Resources in the areas of local & global mission

As Manitoba MB churches seek to live on mission, imagine the impact and benefits of mission training in your church.

MATTHEW 28:20 - As Jesus sends us, we continue to live life on mission together. We focus on following God into His mission in the world, where people transformed by the message of Jesus bring reconciliation, healing and hope to their communities.

We hear God calling us to compassionately minister to those among us and continue to invite people to Christ-centred faith communities as God is leading us.

**Cam Priebe**