

Elton DaSilva presents at PCO
East, October, 2021.

PHOTO: KRISTI LEE



CCMBC report to provincial conventions

A Message of hope

Uncertainty, stress, and anxiety have been recurring themes over the past two years. The global pandemic has been particularly disruptive for churches. Yet, despite our buildings being closed and limited church attendance, the gospel continues to flourish worldwide. God's Church will be ok. Even this unprecedented global event could not stop the advancement of God's kingdom. For the MB Church in Canada, we continuously pivot and discover new and innovative ways of connecting and doing ministry. This turbulent moment in history is a time to listen, re-evaluate priorities, and scale back. The MB Church will emerge from the pandemic more agile, ready to engage in the mission of disciple-making. I have great hope and expectation that a renewed focus on making disciples locally and globally will bear much fruit in the years ahead.

Looking back

This past year CCMBC has been working to fulfill and advance the goals entrusted to us.

Approved Bylaws and CUSP

We are grateful to have **new bylaws** that incorporate the functionality of the Collaborative governance Model. Some provincial conferences are updating their bylaws to reflect changes approved at the national level.

The Collaborative Model requires a "common mission and agenda." At the June 2021 AGM, MB churches approved the **Collaborative Unified Strategic Plan (CUSP)**. The CUSP is a product of input from all parts, with provincial and national levels vetting it several times in the year leading up to its approval.

The MB Herald Digest gains momentum.

CCMBC is committed to communicating to churches. In January 2020, we published the final printed copy of *MB Herald Quarterly*. After a pause to decompress and discern, CCMBC invested in an e-magazine to follow the Herald. Delivered monthly, the *MB Herald Digest* has been well-received, utilizing new contributors from across the country resourcing our family of churches. We are seeing steady growth in subscriptions and advertising; still, many MBs are unaware of this valuable resource. I invite you to **subscribe** to and share our family magazine with your friends and colleagues.

The communications department is in the process of redesigning the CCMBC website with a focus on simple navigation and presenting our multiple online platforms in a single location. The website was last redesigned in 2014. The relaunch target is June of this year.

Financial Report

CCMBC is committed to living within our means. We see the results of our commitment demonstrated by a positive financial report. In 2021 we proposed a smaller, leaner budget to compensate for financial pressures caused by the pandemic. Most of our provinces were able to meet or exceed their support goals to the national conference. Reductions, careful fiscal management, and government support allowed us to finish this year with a \$196,000 surplus. This surplus will go towards repaying outstanding debt incurred by the separation of Legacy and CCMBC.

Looking Forward

There are several areas of concentrated effort that lay ahead of us, including:

Operationalizing the CUSP

Now that we have an agreed-upon plan in place, it is essential to begin operationalizing it. Phase one involves setting up provincial ministry teams to establish a tactical approach, goals, and metrics in the four priority areas identified within the CUSP (Spiritual Health and Theology, Leadership Development, Mission, and Organizational Health). At this stage, all provincial boards and staff have affirmed this direction and are actively building their teams.

A reduced 2022 budget

Due to financial strains on the provincial conferences, CCMBC will present our smallest budget on record to the 2022 National Assembly. We will propose significant cuts to programs and growth items, so the 2022 budget will require strict management. As we enter our third year of single-stream funding, I appeal to churches—as you are able—to increase provincial conference support. Your commitment to the provincial budget reflects the province’s capacity to maintain national programs and ministries.

Managing the moving parts of a collaborative Church conference

CCMBC, provincial, and agency representatives are hard at work on Strategic Partnership Agreements (SPAs) to clarify the participation and engagement of all parties in the mission of the MB Church in Canada. CCMBC and partner agencies will rework their Memos of Understanding (MOUs) to define our working agreements. CCMBC is also building a governance library that describes how the Collaborative Model affects all relationships within our MB family of churches.

A promise to listen

We stand committed to presenting opportunities to hear from the diverse voices within our family. To that end, we have implemented two new lanes of engagement:

1. The National Council invites all board members from the provinces and national agencies to help shape ideas and ministry.
2. National Town Halls provide opportunities for any MB church member to engage, share advice and opinions, and receive information. We want church members to help shape the ministry and mission of our family of churches.
3. A task force is actively exploring possible ways of arriving at decisions in our meetings. When the work is complete, the task force will recommend a new model to the CCMBC Executive Board and National Assembly.

Planning an in-person EQUIP Study Conference

At the time of writing this report, the EQUIP planning team is working towards an in-person Equip Study Conference for 2022. We closely monitor changing travel and gathering restrictions, and gauge people’s comfort levels. Be on the lookout for further information on this topic. On November 19-20, 2021, we hosted the first Equip Mini on *Engaging Healthy Conversation Around Difficult Topics in the Church* with author, theologian, and pastor, David Fitch. We are making plans to host a second Equip Mini this spring. Stay tuned for more information, we will be updating the **EQUIP website** in the weeks ahead.

In closing, my prayer is that God will renew each of you and fill you with his Holy Spirit as you worship and serve him.



ELTON DASILVA,
National Director, Canadian Conference of
Mennonite Brethren Churches