



## THE ALBERTA CONFERENCE OF MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCHES

### **PRIORITIZING DISCIPLE-MAKING**

Priorities...we all have them. Sometimes we state them, or write them down. Intuitively we are motivated by what is important to us—or urgent! If we are not careful we will do things that are urgent, reacting to the loudest squeak or the biggest bang! To be effective we must continually place in front of us the most important and then plan it into our calendar. Hard to do, but imperative!

We have identified 7 priorities to guide ABMB as we seek to “multiply Christ-centered churches to see Alberta transformed by the good news of Jesus Christ.” They are:

1. Commit to prayer (Luke 10:2; 2 Timothy 2:2)
2. Create and model disciple-making leaders and churches
3. Coordinate healthy church systems.
4. Provide pastoral support and credentialing
5. Encourage church multiplication
6. Grow financial health
7. Develop next generation ministry and networks.

Allow me to highlight the 2nd priority—*creating and modelling disciple-making leaders and churches.*

Just as children are birthed after a period of gestation, nurtured as infants, taught as children, given responsibility as youth, and eventually released as adults from the home to replicate the process in their own families (usually), a similar process is at work in our maturing process as followers (disciples) of Jesus (see 1 John 2). Imagine if we outlined every stage of this discipleship development in our churches, starting with a fully mature, multiplying disciple of Jesus, and then worked our way backwards.

What does a mature disciple look like in their *relationship* with Jesus, what do we expect them to be able to *do*, what *experiences* should they have at that stage, and what do we require them to *know*? Moving backwards, in their Christian maturity, what would we expect them to know, experience, do, and relate as a "youth/young adult disciple", spiritually speaking? What if every church would do this for every stage of spiritual maturity, in the church? What if every activity, relationship, event were driven by the question, "What stage of discipleship maturity are we planning this for, and how will this help them mature to the next stage?"

This is the focus for our Pastoral Peer clusters in May. In September, a few of us pastors are heading to Idaho for training in this area and we will have some additional opportunities throughout the year for more equipping (we'll keep you posted).

Remember, Jesus didn't command us to grow churches, or plant churches. He commanded us to *make disciples* (Matthew 28:19-20).



A pastoral-equipping and orientation event, for those who are new to ministry within the Mennonite Brethren conference and for others who are seeking a refresher on Mennonite Brethren history, theology and resources. Those who attend and complete the requirements are eligible for pastor's credentialing through the ABMB. The next PCO is scheduled for June 8-11, 2015. Click on the logo for more information.



God, Sex & Church - a theology of healthy sexuality. This conference offers attendees the opportunity to practice community hermeneutic and study important theological topics. Everyone is welcome. October 21-23, 2015 in Winnipeg. Click on the logo for more information

### **MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

October 4-6, 2015 - ABMB Pastors and Spouses Retreat. More info to come soon.

October 16-18, 2015 - AWAKE in Edmonton. More info to come soon.

October 23-26, 2015 - Church Renewal Weekend. [Click here for more info.](#)

### **PEER CLUSTERS FOR 2015-2016**

September through June, our three cluster groups (north, central, and south) meet regularly. Participants are pastors and leaders serving in parachurch ministries through the Alberta Conference. The focus of our clusters is to provide a safe and open time for leaders to share their concerns, passions, and experience in areas of ministry with a view to empowering one another toward effective and fulfilling ministry. Although locations are yet to be determined, the following are the scheduled dates for the upcoming year:

North - Sep 24, Nov 26, Jan 14, Mar 3, May 12, Jun 23

Central - Sep 22, Nov 24, Jan 12, Mar 1, May 10, Jun 21

South - Sep 23, Nov 25, Jan 13, Mar 2, May 11, Jun 22

If you have any questions about Peer Clusters, please contact Paul Loewen at [paul.loewen@abmb.ca](mailto:paul.loewen@abmb.ca)

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**Our mailing address is:**

ABMB  
160 - 340 Midpark Way SE  
Calgary, AB T2X 1P1

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