

2022 ABMB Board Report

What does conference mean to you? Does it feel abstract or concrete? Is it distant or up close? Is it something you know is out there, but are unsure how it affects you? Or is it something your church has intentionally been engaged with and connected to?

This is the sixth year that I have been on the ABMB Conference board, and I have noticed that there are several situations that create awareness and highlight the impact of our conference. These include:

- Churches that are experiencing leadership change and need resource help on determining their next steps.
- Churches that are undergoing significant internal conflict and need help navigating a positive outcome.
- Churches that are studying the MB Confession of Faith and seeking clarification.
- Churches that have pastors going through the credentialing process.
- Churches that have pastors involved with the Pastor Clusters – regular meetings that encourage province wide communication and support among church leaders.
- Churches that are sending congregants to provincial and national conventions, conferences, or Equip Study Conference.
- Churches that have sent their pastors to the Pastor’s retreat to be encouraged and rejuvenated.
- Churches that have encouraged their congregation and leaders to be involved in provincial conference ministry like the Faith Team, or as a member of the ABMB Board.

The ABMB conference is privileged to be involved in supporting and engaging with our churches in a variety of ways, many of them happen in the background, but all are important in assisting church health and ministry.

Our mission as a conference is: *To cultivate a community and culture of healthy disciple-making churches and ministries, faithfully joining Jesus in His mission.* We exist to inspire, equip, and resource ABMB leaders and churches for disciple-making ministry and mission.

During this past year, we as a board were again emphasizing the following:

1. Fostering relationships.
Relationship and communication with our ABMB churches continues to be a critical and overarching goal. Paul Loewen and Laurence Hiebert are connecting with our pastors and church leaders striving to deepen friendships, show care and be a source of resource and encouragement. This past year, our board members reached out to our church moderators on two occasions to hear stories, concerns, and seek feedback on how the ABMB conference can support and help our churches in their ministry.
2. Leadership development.
This has been identified as a primary goal for several years in our conference both provincially and nationally. Camp Evergreen has a very strong leadership training program that runs each year during the camping season. We strongly encourage our churches to intentionally send their young people to serve and grow in leadership skills.

We, along with the National conference, want to invest financially in our young people who are serving in camp ministries and involved in Bible College/Seminary training. We invite sending churches to join in this opportunity which we will discuss more at the convention.

In November 2022 and February 2023, MB Seminary, in partnership with SunWest Church in Calgary, provided an Alberta opportunity for seminary training. This program involves bringing a seminary professor to Calgary to lead a condensed seminary course on Friday night and Saturday. It can be taken for seminary course credit, or it can be taken for personal interest. We are very excited for this opportunity that is available to our Alberta churches for enhanced leadership training. We fully support this initiative by SunWest and MB Seminary and want to SHOUT this out to our congregations. There are plans for more courses to come. Please make yourself and your congregation aware of this great opportunity to enhance your biblical leadership training that is being offered by our own seminary. It is for ALL OF US.

3. Missional opportunity.

As an enhancement to leadership development, we have often asked whether there is opportunity for a mission team that could be part of camp leadership and assist with VBS programs in our Alberta churches, especially where there is limited volunteer help. We continue to seek feedback from our churches to see if this would fulfill a need and opportunity.

We are also aware that some of our churches are engaged with helping other ABMB churches through pulpit sharing, program resources and financial support. If you have had opportunity to engage in this type of ministry with other ABMB churches, thank you. If not, are there ways you could lean in to help share your skills, knowledge, and resources? I am convinced that intentionally reaching out to another ABMB church will enhance and strengthen your church whether you are a larger urban gathering or a smaller city or rural group.

Our board and leadership team are continually aware of the financial resources that you as churches share with the conference. We are grateful that through your generosity, we have been able to maintain positive financial outcomes over the last number of years. As you are aware, we will be discussing donation targets for our churches at this convention. We recognize that all our churches have unique challenges and opportunities that affect their financial resources. We have asked your church boards to give feedback on expectations and we encourage your discussion at the convention as we develop that target. I encourage us to recognize that supporting our conference whether spiritually, physically, or financially is an extension of the local church outreach ministry and has broad missional impact provincially and nationally.

We as a board are grateful for the strong leadership we have through the full-time work of our Executive Director, Paul Loewen, and part-time work of our Conference Minister, Laurence Hiebert, and Administration Assistant, Rebecca Boschman. We also deeply appreciate the work that our Faith team carries out as they assist with credentialing, theological understanding, and the spiritual and physical care of our churches. I also want to thank fellow board members. It has been a pleasure to serve with you.

Finally, thank you to each of our churches who have served faithfully in their communities and join in the ministry of our conference. We depend on each other to be involved, engaged, and aware as we participate in Christ's mission.

For the Board,
Tim Doerksen
Moderator