

ABMB Executive Director Report (Paul J Loewen)

April 2023, Report for the year ending 2022

"[If] we don't remember what happened in the past, [then] in future generations, no one will remember what we are doing now." Ecclesiastes 1:11 (slightly edited from the NLT)

The Bible reminds us frequently "to remember" the work of God, the salvation of His people, His death and resurrection, and the list goes on. As I look back on 2022, I see God's work in many ways here at ABMB. Let me highlight a few:

- We have an executive board that engages in good dialogue, helpful ideas, leadership by example, and strong support and accountability for me as provincial director.
- Churches gaining momentum as the end of the pandemic has drawn stronger desire for spiritual answers and relational connections. Recently some of our churches have expressed some very positive numeric growth.
- Our lead pastoral positions have been filled, with some exceptions: Dalhousie is gaining significant momentum through the leadership of a transitional pastor; Gem is preparing for a pastoral transition within the next year as their pastor is retiring; Vauxhall is looking for a pastor after successfully going through a season of assessment and vision refocusing.
- We are also in the process of integrating some congregations from our Congolese-Rwandan community: Goshen is credentialing their pastors, Release Church is working toward joining ABMB, and another congregation has expressed interest as well.
- Credentialing and ordination of pastors whom God has called for this ministry. (See Faith Team report, Laurence Hiebert)
- Financial support that has allowed us to meet our expenses and even to support a part-time conference minister!
- Young people who are sensing God's call in their lives, living for His glory rather than seeking pleasures of their own.
- Camps, colleges, seminary, and mission agencies working together for a new generation of Kingdom leaders!
- Kids being disciplined in churches, youth heading out on mission trips, seniors providing wisdom and prayer, marketplace influencers making a difference in the Kingdom of God.

To remember is to *re-member*, to bring together people, thoughts, and events that otherwise would be left to drift, to be separated from meaning without purpose and significance. As we remember well, we see God at work, we see people being united, we experience miracles of protection and changed lives, of a world in which God is glorified and His people encouraged! I encourage you to take a moment to remember what God has done among you in this past year.

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.* In September we hosted a disciple-making seminar for our pastors through a "discipling coach" (Jon Luesink) who is assisting our churches in developing *Discovery Bible Study* as a tool for reaching and growing disciples.

Moving forward, we will continue to focus on three primary areas.

1. **Fostering Relationships** that encourage ministry partnerships and support. We will re-do our website and our communications structure. This project will be completed by the end of summer. We will continue to connect our pastors with each other for fellowship, mutual

learning, and prayer through the monthly “cluster” format. The board continues to meet with church board chairs for input, feedback, and friendship. In addition, ABMB and SKMB are purposefully on a track of greater collaboration in our provincial ministry praxis. The 2022 Banff Leadership (Pastors) Retreat encouraged our collective resolve to work together in the future. As much as possible and practical, we see future efforts to resource and equip our church leaders to be done jointly. 2023 will see some foundational groundwork being laid upon which we can construct enhanced ministry collaboration.

2. **Leadership Development:** A new generation of young leaders is rising in our churches and we want to increase our culture of “shoulder-tapping”. One specific project will be to provide matching leadership scholarships for camp and Bible college. Please consider inviting an emerging leader in your church to consider camp or Bible college. ABMB is making resources available to encourage churches to send their youth and young adults into these opportunities. Also, special thanks to SunWest for partnering with MB Seminary to become a Teaching Church. This is an incredible opportunity for every person in the church to receive practical leadership training and equipping in biblical knowledge and ministry tools. Watch for more classes this coming year.
3. **Missional Opportunities:** An extension of leadership development is to provide opportunities to practice, to do ministry. This summer we plan to research the possibility of what it will look like for us to develop a VBS/Day Camp leadership team that could serve our churches in 2024. We envision a team of 4-6 young adults to form the core of this team. Various churches, along with Camp Evergreen, could provide training, resources, and expertise to develop this for 2024. Additionally, the host church would supply support staff, including teens, who can round out the staffing needs.

To deliver these priorities, we need **Ministry Teams** to be able to multiply this effort. These teams are needed to increase the capacity for ministry.

- a. Our existing **Faith Team** focuses on credentialing pastors and assisting our churches with biblical and theological support. We are looking for an additional 2 or 3 credential-holders to expand this team. (Also see Faith Team report)
- b. A **Leadership Team** is being developed to focus on opportunities and support for both emerging leaders and professional development for existing church leaders. A primary focus will be on developing the provincial VBS-type ministry.
- c. A **Mission Team** to support our churches with their outreach impact. This team will assist in communicating mission stories, and collaborating in opportunities both local and abroad, including church-planting and support.
- d. An **Organizational Health Team** will require a team of people who are interested in walking with churches in administrative support, ranging from HR advice, policies, bylaws, church assessments & vision refocusing, financial coaching.

Except for the Faith Team (credential-holders), these teams are an opportunity for any church member or adherent! Check it out. Talk to me or email us at office@abmb.ca.

Looking forward to 2023, I believe we are entering a new season of growth and possibility. People are more spiritually hungry, looking for a way out of dark times and depressing situations. While the world is “shaking and shivering” our God is safe and secure. We have a message of hope and blessing that we can offer. As we faithfully and generously share the Good News, people will respond!