

“On Mission Together”

Saskatchewan Conference of MB Churches

Assembly 2020



The Saskatchewan Conference of M.B. Churches (SKMB) held their 74th annual Assembly March 13 – 14 at West Portal Church in Saskatoon.

Approximately 125 delegates and guests chose to meet as the province was deluged with Covid-19 warnings and captivated with fear over the spread of

the pandemic. At the time of the Assembly only one presumptive case of the virus was reported but fear over the spread of the virus resulted in a cascade of cancelations of church services, university classes and organized sports events. True to SKMB's theme: Overcomers: In Christ We Are Victors, Assembly participants joined together to worship, fellowship and conducted the work of the Conference.

The keynote speakers for the Assembly included Jeromey Martini, president of Horizon College & Seminary (Saskatoon), Randy Friesen, president of Multiply and Darryl Balzaar, president of Thrive School of Discipleship (Hepburn). Respectively, they spoke on being an overcomer possessing the peace of Christ in a fractured world, being a faithful overcomer who gives witness of Jesus' death and resurrection in a lost world and being a humble overcomer in an anxious world. Considering the reality of what was unfolding in the province with Covid-19, Martini encouraged the church to be an island of sanity in a world of chaos, fear and brokenness. Friesen reminded listeners to put the pandemic into perspective in light of the great persecution and death faced by Christians in Africa and the Middle East. Balzaar concluded that followers of Jesus are blessed to be able to cast their anxieties about the pandemic upon the One who is sovereign and compassionate.

Special presentations at the Assembly included a report from Rudi Plett, Executive Director of ICOMB, who called delegates to pray for unity among the MB conference around the world. Former conference minister Ralph Gliege led the Friday evening communion service. Gliege reminded participants to take serious the covenant nature of partaking in



Director's Calendar

March & April

Due to provincial restrictions and social distancing practices, the DM's schedule is fluid at this stage.

Please pray for wisdom and patience.

PREPARING Your CHURCH for COVID-19

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Supporting SKMB Churches and Camps in Making Disciples



communion and reflect upon the great victory Jesus had won through the cross and resurrection.

A major proposal adopted at the Assembly was the Five Year strategic Framework (2020 – 2025). This framework fits seamlessly with the MB Church of Canada's strategic framework. Three areas of focus include: (1) Pastoral/church care & Conference unity, (2) Leadership development, and (3) Making disciples. The SKMB strategic framework is founded upon four principles: (1) prayer, (2) collaboration, (3) mutual resourcing, and (4) sustainable funding and strategic investing.

A second major proposal affirmed by delegates was the contracted hire of a discipleship coach whose role would be to extend the work of the Director of Ministry in the area of discipleship and multiplication. Luke Etelamaki, a church planter (The Compass, Regina),

was called to this work and will begin April 1st. Etelamaki will primarily build relationships with SKMB churches and camps, encouraging, supporting, inspiring and resourcing them in their efforts to make disciples. A secondary role will be to lead in planning and implementing discipleship and church planting training events.

A third major proposal ratified by delegates was the creation of a Common Understandings & Common Covenant document. The purpose of such a document would be to articulate specific and tangible faith and ministry convictions and expectations for all member churches of the SKMB family. It would also serve to provide a clear template for what it means to be a member church in good standing.



Rev. Philip Gunther, SKMB Director of Ministry, conveyed the state of the province address at the Assembly. Gunther claimed the Saskatchewan Conference was more unified in 2020 than in 2019, "I believe there is a greater sense of being on mission together, pushing past self-interest to working synergistically to make disciples here in Saskatchewan." He believed the conference was more collaborative in 2020 than in 2019. "We have adopted the collaborative model as an MB family and are now living into that reality." He stated that he believed the conference was more focused, resourced, confident, optimistic, kingdom-minded and giving in 2020 than in 2019. "With the introduction of the five-year strategic framework there is a sense that we now have the vehicle that will drive and guide mission. We have the organizational traction in 2020 needed to propel us onward in our kingdom work."

Gunther was also realistic about the challenges facing the conference. "A third of our family is growing and on mission, a third of our family is maintaining ministry but struggling with missional drift, and a third of our family is simply surviving. As I come alongside all of our churches and camps, some need affirmation for what is being accomplished, some need counsel to achieve missional focus, and some need to consider a radical departure from what has been done in their ministry plan to thinking about doing an impossible – only if God does it -- plan. I don't believe God wants any church or camp to operate in survival mode, He wants them to be thriving and pointedly on the mission of making disciples."

Concluding his address, Gunther called for those facing challenges to heed the counsel of Jesus: "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, he who seeks finds and to him who knocks, the door will be opened (Matthew 7:7-8)." As you consider your own context, are you, in faith, asking, seeking and knocking? Are you looking for a way out instead of a way ahead? Are you focused on all the ways things could go wrong instead of all the possibilities with ELOHIM – the all-powerful One, at your side? Are you asking, seeking and knocking out of FEAR or FAITH? If the Lord is holding us up in His victorious right hand (Isaiah 41:10), are we then not victors together with Him? Are we operating out of that position? Are you thinking about your leadership from of that position?"