

Board of Church Extension Report

The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.
Acts 11:21

The book of Acts tells the exciting story of the launch and the growth of the Early Church. It's our story, actually. Right here and now - as we see God at work in us and through us, filling us with His Spirit, drawing people to Himself, and establishing new churches - we are still writing new chapters in the very same story that began in the first few chapters of Acts. What an amazing privilege it is, to by the empowering and directing of His Spirit, be witnesses of Christ's love and grace.

Mandate

Our mandate as the BOCE is to promote and facilitate evangelism and church planting within our province. Although this could be seen as a two-fold mandate, we choose to see these not as separate directives, but as two intertwined tracks accomplishing a single objective. Jesus' charge to us is neither clouded nor complicated – *"make disciples."* That is the excuse we give for doing what we do as the BOCE. We believe that as we effectively reach out to people with the gospel message, we will have the opportunity to plant new churches. And as we plant new churches, we will have the opportunity to reach out more effectively to more people with the gospel message.

Prairie Winds Church (Moose Jaw)

We are very encouraged by what God has been doing in Moose Jaw through Prairie Winds Church (PWC). Our church planters, Joe and Shantelle Almeida, have pulled together a very gifted and committed core group, and together they are beginning to make some exciting inroads into the community. PWC has experienced some significant growth over the past several months. They are now meeting in a school and their goal is to "go public" in October of this year. We value your continued encouragement, prayer, and support for the work of PWC.

We have truly appreciated Jake Balzer, church planting consultant from BC, who has been Joe's coach this past year. He has been coming to Moose Jaw every couple of months to consult with Joe and the leaders of PWC and to assist them with setting goals and clarifying action steps. Jake will carry on in this capacity for 2004, although his visits to Moose Jaw will be less frequent.

Project Reach Your World (PRYW)

Project Reach Your World is a fund administered by the BOCE to which churches may apply for financial assistance in running outreach events and programs. We have clearly stated from the beginning that it's not about the money – it's about getting churches to dream about what they might do in the area of evangelism. This program has been in place for 2 years now, and during this time we have been able to assist churches in running a wide variety of creative events. Initiating Alpha programs, bringing in Christian entertainers, beginning support groups, pool parties, pancake breakfasts, inner-city outreaches, and many more initiatives have all been sponsored in whole or in part by PRYW. We look forward to more creative thinking and exciting stories in the coming year.

Healing Hearts Ministry

We are still in dialoging with Healing Hearts regarding the possibility of them becoming an associate ministry within the Saskatchewan MB Conference. Healing Hearts is a ministry to inner-city families in Regina. We feel that some sort of formal partnership could be mutually beneficial, and are continuing to explore what this affiliation might look like.

Future Direction & Planning

Looking to the future, we as the BOCE are beginning to dream and talk about what's next in the area of church planting. In the past few years we have been involved in two very different models of planting churches. Living Hope Church in Saskatoon is a daughter church of West Portal, while Prairie Winds Church in Moose Jaw is more of a "pioneer work." We believe that both models of church planting are necessary for reaching people and communities within our province. We will therefore continue to encourage and help to facilitate churches or clusters of churches that would like to be involved in planting a daughter church. And we will also actively explore possibilities for new church plants in communities where a stronger evangelical influence is needed and where there currently may not be an MB presence. We will move ahead prayerfully and carefully, but we believe we must move forward in planting new churches. We are inspired by what has taken place in church planting here in our province over the past few years, and we are excited about the possibilities ahead of us.

BOCE Members

I want to say thank-you to the board members for your help and support this past year. In July of 2003 Greg Bright, chair of the BOCE, accepted a 1-year missions assignment as chaplain at a Christian School in India. At this point I took over the chairperson responsibilities and have really appreciated the way we have been able to plan, work, and pray together as a board. The other BOCE members from this past year have been: Elaine Wiens, Calvin Penner, Mark Trew, Scott Loewen, and Marion Oatway. It has been a joy to work together with you this past year.

Submitted on behalf of the Board of Church Extension,
Andrew Fehr (interim chair)