

DIRECTOR OF CHURCH MINISTRIES REPORT - Ralph and Grace Gliege

The ABC's (actually A to J) of Conference Ministry

A - Attend Meetings. Going to meetings is not all that bad! I get to connect with many wonderful people at all kinds of meetings. Provincially I get to meet in varying degrees with the Executive - Executive Board - Faith and Life - Extension - Management. I am very grateful for many highly gifted people who volunteer their valuable time to serve in various capacities. In the Canadian MB Conference I have the privilege of being part of the Board of Faith and Life and then I have the joy of meeting several times a year with other Provincial Conference Ministers along with our Executive Director. Twice a year I meet with Regional Denominational Ministers from a great variety of denominations and it's great to actually begin to feel like a family in this kind of a setting.

B - Belonging. It's great to belong to a local family of believers. Grace and I are part of the congregation at Living Hope Church. Because our services are held on Sunday evening, we get to attend on a fairly regular basis - about 50% of the time. That's very good for us, but I hope you have a better attendance record in your home church. We belong to a Care Group within Living Hope Church where Grace and I fellowship and interact on a regular basis. I serve as an Elder for the Church and Grace is involved in doing some teaching in the Children's Ministry.

C - Celebrations. I'm sure you thought I would use "Church" or "Conference" for the "C" word. I could have, but that might make this report too predictable. Actually our ministry really revolves around the Church and the Conference. We do get to celebrate within the life of the Church. This past year we celebrated Church anniversaries of 75 years at Glenbush and 20 years at Yorkton. We also celebrated 15 years of ministry for Mike and Connie Housek at Beechy, 10 years for Archie and Erna Jantzen at Arelee and 10 years for Dennis and Faith Friesen at Foam Lake.

Commissionings and Appointments. Each year we have the joy of seeing new pastors being commissioned and appointed.

- Gateway Community Church in Canora appointed Pat and Gina Dergousoff and Joey and Eden Umali to serve as Interim Pastors while Pastor Greg and Carolyn went to India for 10 months
- Ed (Val) Fehr and Kimberly Fehr were appointed as Interim Youth Workers in Waldheim until May when Justin (Jodi) Klassen will be commissioned as Associate Pastor

Commissionings included:

- Bob (Betty) Cappelle as Lead Pastor at Herbert
- Jason (Karina) Dyck as Associate Pastor at Dalmeny
- Stacey (LeeAnne) Ellertson as Director of Care and Counseling at Swift Current
- Harv (Shirley) Janzen as Pastor at Yorkton

We also had the joy of participating in the commissioning of our two new Camp Directors.

Classes. I took two classes this year in my Masters level of studies. "Models of Leadership" taught by Doug Berg offered through MBBS and taught at Bethany College. The second class, "Perspectives on the World Christian Movement" was taught in Saskatoon over the course of 15 Monday evenings.

D - Driving. We get to drive around this great and beautiful Province. We see amazing sunrises and sunsets, lots of deer (the Lord provided another year of “no hits”), grain fields, lakes, forests, etc. Driving is relaxation time for me. Living in Saskatoon has reduced the number of kilometers we drive per year. We also attempt to make our trips count as much as possible, so we probably log fewer kilometers than might be expected. This past year we logged 18, 779 kilometers within the Province. This would not include our personal driving, flights and travel outside the Province, and some travel within the Province when I ride along with others for Board Meetings.

E - Emails. Much of my communication is done via email. I still prefer the personal contact which we attempt to make with as many of our pastors as possible. I also still enjoy talking on the phone. I least enjoy the email, but it is the way of communication. Much of my time is spent relating to people in person, by phone or by email.

F - Feasts. Mennonite Brethren know how to cook! Grace and I enjoy many scrumptious feasts following worship services in our churches. Oh it’s good. I even got to participate in the famous “egg flip” at a men’s breakfast at Carrot River. For those of you who are aware that I don’t even know how to crack an egg, you will be amazed to know that I successfully flipped the egg!

Family. We are grateful for the support we get from our children. It’s fun to relate with Kevin and Luanne as one of our Pastoral Couples, and Lyndon and Carolyn provide a wonderful get-away spot for us at their home at Smoothstone Lake. Our grandson, Hunter, occasionally provides me with good sermon illustration material.

G - Grieving. There is a process of grieving that congregations go through during times of pastoral transition or closure of a ministry. We find ourselves entering into that grieving process with them. The following churches experienced pastoral transitions in 2003:

- Waldheim: David (Marles) Tooke as Associate Pastor
- Lanigan: Keith (Jenni) Derksen as Associate Pastor
- Carrot River: Clinton (Amy) Friesen as Pastor
- Living Hope: Steve (Lisa) Harms as Youth Pastor
- Swift Current: Chad (Sandy) Neustaeter as Associate Pastor
- Yorkton: Henry (Esther) Penner as Interim Pastor

We were also saddened by the closure of the Chinese Community Church. I believe the group made the right decision to close because they were so few in number. However, these were and still are very dear brothers and sisters in Christ. These are such hospitable people. They took Grace and I out for a huge Chinese supper (real Chinese food!) as a gesture of love. We wept and feasted together.

Grace and I feel like we belong in each of our 30 churches. We are saddened when we hear of deaths within the congregations. It’s impossible for us to go to all the funerals, although we attend when that is possible. However, we grieve with you in your loss.

H - Helping. What a thrill to be able to help people. I appreciate when people take the time to listen to me when I share pain and joy in my life. In the same way, it's our desire to listen and observe carefully so that we can celebrate joys, share burdens and claim victories especially in the lives of our pastors. Our goal is to visit as many of our congregations and pastors as possible each year. We did not make the entire round this year but came fairly close. We were able to meet with leadership teams in several of our churches and help a number of churches in pastoral searches and transitions. I had the thrill of assisting in two baptismal services in the absence of a Pastor. We want to be available to serve. In July we were privileged to provide a "parental role" for a group of students who went to Pierceland to conduct a week of Vacation Bible School (fun camp). This was a wonderful experience for us and we think it was for them too!

I - Investing. It's great when investments pay high dividends. In the past we have reaped huge benefits from Pastoral Interns who are now serving as Pastors in a number of our churches. This year we are very happy to have Interns serving at Forest Grove, Foam Lake and Regina.

We also invest yearly into the lives of new staff through the pastoral orientation. Last year was a "catch up year" since the orientation took place in Saskatoon - 11 Pastors attended. We anticipate sending a number to the Orientation in Edmonton, April 1 - 3.

The annual Pastoral Retreat is another way in which we invest into the lives of the Pastors. We gathered again in October for a wonderful time of fellowship, teaching, playing and eating. Eric Wingender led us in challenging sessions on the theme: "Who is in Charge when I am Not in Control?" We learned lessons on this theme from three Biblical characters. The retreat was attended by 69 people. Grace and I enjoy hosting this event.

We have opportunity to invest in the lives of others through preaching. I preached almost half of the 52 Sundays this past year. I spoke at a series of community meetings in Carrot River as well as at the 55+ Retreat (even though I was under-age) at West Bank Bible Camp. For the past several years I have taught Bethany students for two days regarding special ministry related events such as weddings, child dedications, baptisms and funerals. These days have been highlights for me and they give me opportunity to "relieve" some of my days as a Pastor of a Church.

J - Joy. Our feelings could be summed up with the words in III John 2 - 4: *Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. It gave me great joy to have some brothers come and tell about your faithfulness to the truth and how you continue to walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.*

K - Z - my report is already too long. You can use your imagination and fill in the rest, or perhaps I will pick up on these points next year. That's not a firm commitment though - after all, what could I write about with the letters X and Z?