

BOARD OF FAITH AND LIFE REPORT

"Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers." 1Timothy 4:16

Paul's advice to Timothy in this passage of scripture speaks to us today as we live out the Christian life in our context, and also captures the mandate of the Board of Faith and Life as we endeavor to ensure that our Conference of churches stay true to sound doctrine and Christian lifestyle.

Over the past year the board has consisted of Stephen White (Board Chair), Terry Froese (Vice Chair), Menno Martens (Representative to Canadian Conference Board of Faith and Life), Neil Krahn (Saskatoon), Clarence Peters (Waldheim), Ray Ulriksen (Kelstern). I wish to thank each one of these for their efforts this year. Their wisdom and discernment has been vitally important to the work of this board.

The following is a summary of the work we have been involved in this year:

1. Women in Ministry leadership discussion

We have had more discussion as a board on the issue of whether women should be allowed to hold Senior Pastor positions within our denomination. After a great deal of discussion we decided that we are much too divided to make a board decision on this and therefore are advising our churches to be sure and research this issue for themselves and send delegates to the Canadian Convention in July. Our churches should either instruct their delegates as to how they should vote, or allow them to vote according to their beliefs on this issue.

2. Same Sex Marriage Legislation

We are also still dealing with some of the fallout from the legalization of same-sex marriage. As a result of this legislation Saskatchewan Justice has reworded the marriage registration forms to be gender inclusive. Our Director of Church Ministries has been in consultation with them so as to point out some of the errors and inconsistencies of these forms as well as to let them know our displeasure. At this point we are advising our Pastors to use the old forms until further notice. We have also asked our Director of Church Ministries to connect with other denominational leaders to determine whether we can act in concert on this matter.

3. Ordination Interviews

This year we have processed one candidate for ordination. Tony Martens has been approved by our board for ordination within the Mennonite Brethren Churches. We met with Tony and Michelle and Jim Block (moderator of the Borden Church) on January 17th in their home in Borden and had an excellent visit and interview with them.

In addition to these items we spent a fair bit of time discussing how we could help our churches to be proactive in dealing with some of the issues of negative sexuality that we are presently facing within our culture. It is our concern that unless we begin to speak to some of these issues in creative ways the next generation of leaders may not have the same convictions we do today. We would be naïve to believe that it won't be a problem within our churches when so much of our culture is actively proposing that these behaviors are acceptable. Unfortunately we have been unable to find the right avenue to move ahead with this and have had to table it for the time.

Respectfully,

Stephen White