

DIRECTOR OF CHURCH MINISTRIES REPORT
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This report is being written from a hotel room in beautiful Harrison Hot Springs, B.C. where the Canadian MB Conference Ministers and spouses have been meeting for a retreat. We have seen brief moments of sunshine allowing us to catch glimpses of the lofty mountains with their beauty and majesty. There has been lots of rain and tonight the world is being transformed with an abundance of snow. All of this reminds me of what the Lord says in Isaiah 55:9 - 12: *As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is My word that goes out from My mouth: It will not return to Me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.*

Our theme for this year has been PARTNERSHIP WITH PURPOSE. When we partner with God, His purposes will be achieved. It's an interesting exercise to look back over the past year. We can certainly see God's faithfulness in this partnership. I hope He can say the same about us.

I will divide this report into two parts namely a backward look and then a forward look.

LOOKING BACK - the highs and lows of 2005 (not listed in any particular order)...

1. Church and Pastoral Visits

- Our primary responsibility to be a Pastor to the Pastors is both a great privilege and a huge responsibility. Through phone calls, emails, meals, over a cup of coffee, visits in the homes or church offices of the pastors and through visits in our home; we are able to maintain contact and relationship with the Pastors and their families.
- Visits to the churches are so enriching. What a great variety of congregations within our Province. We regret not being able to be in each church annually on a Sunday. This past year we attended Sunday services in 22 of the churches - a good number of these involved two or more visits. Preaching is still an important part of my life and ministry and I had the joy of preaching 20 times in Sunday services.

2. Illness and death were an unusual part of this year.

- The sudden illness and subsequent death of Pastor Dwayne Harms came as a great shock. Dwayne was a healthy, highly energetic Church Planter. It was so hard to see him suffer so intensely. Just this weekend I was recalling to my fellow Conference Ministers the honor guard of pastors and spouses at Dwayne's funeral. Amazing things happen in spite of hardship when the church and the leadership stand together.
- Late in the Fall, Shantelle Almeida was suddenly struck with an aggressive cancer. She and her husband, Joe, are our Church Planter couple in Moose Jaw. How would we have energy to stand together through another round of cancer? So far, God has given strength and courage in this situation. As in the case of Living Hope Church, so Prairie Winds Church has become stronger through this tough situation. Indeed God's power is made perfect in weakness so that when we are weak we are strong (II Cor. 12:10)
- In April Dr. Herbert Peeler passed away. Mr. Peeler had been part of Millar College of the Bible since it started 73 years ago in 1932. He was a great influence on my life and he was my favorite preacher. What an honor and responsibility was given me when asked to preach the message at his funeral.
- In all, we attended or participated in eleven funerals this year. We were saddened upon the passing of Frank Froese and Otto Derksen. Both these men were such faithful ministers of the Gospel far past their retirement.

3. Annual Events.

- The Provincial Convention in March is a yearly highlight. The years slip by so quickly that I sometimes wonder if we should just meet every other year, but I change my mind after every convention. It seems that every convention is the best one we have ever had! I thank God for the privilege of serving Him in and through the Saskatchewan MB Conference.
- New Pastors' Orientation took place in Ontario in April. It was a privilege to attend this event with four of our young pastoral leaders: Justin Klassen, Paul Morgun, Mark Trew and Brian Wiens.
- The Pastoral Retreat held each October is such an amazing event. Can you imagine trying to lead an event attended by about 70 pastors and spouses? We get to see the "human side" of your pastors at this retreat. There is much laughter, an abundance of good food, ample time for rest and a good dose of spiritual nourishment.
- We have now conducted two Leadership Forums in November which seem to indicate this could become an annual event. The first year we provided resources for Moderators and this year our focus was on Treasurers. This day also serves as a great "pre-convention" event when important information is given to the churches well in advance of the Annual Convention.

4. Special Events

- In June we had the honor of hosting the Canadian MB Conference Ministers and Spouses for a two day retreat. We enjoyed the wonderful facilities at Sandcastle Ranch near Borden.
- Twice each year I have opportunity to meet with other Denominational Conference Ministers from Western Canada. We usually meet in Saskatoon in March and September. It's always enriching to observe and learn from other denominations.
- Twice in June we had opportunity to speak at 55+ retreats at West Bank Bible Camp and Dallas Valley Ranch Camp. It's totally enriching to see people in their "more mature years" still growing in their relationship with God and with each other.
- November saw the Canadian MB Conference Ministers gather in Toronto to spend two days with Bob Logan as he modeled good coaching skills for us and gave us helpful resources. This was followed by the National Church Planting Congress

5. Special Church Events

- The congregations at Borden and Herbert celebrated 100 years in 2005. Gateway Community Church in Canora celebrated 20 years and Woodrow held a special homecoming church service in conjunction with Saskatchewan's Centennial. What a thrill to be part of these services.
- Following the closure of the Warman MB Church, a service was held in which the congregation celebrated God's faithfulness throughout the history of the Church. Frank Froese, a former pastor, gave a powerful message at this closing service in February. He passed away a few months later at the age of 96.
- Other congregations plan to build or purchase a building. It was exciting being with the congregation at Carrot River in May as they turned sod on the location where they hope to build in the near future. It's also been exciting seeing the congregations at Faith River and Living Hope raise the necessary finances to purchase buildings strategically located for their ministries.
- Pastoral recognitions are a very exciting part of our ministry. This is the only time that I get to work "behind the back of the pastor" as we plan a service in honor of five year markers of continuous ministry in the same location. The Moderators have worked hard to help make these services an encouraging surprise to the pastor. This year we recognized five pastors for 5 years and two pastors for 10 years of ministry.
- The departure of a pastor is usually not a highlight in the life of a church, however, this low point is followed by the highlight of the commissioning of a new pastor. This year we had the joy of commissioning Dave and Marianne Grimes as lead pastor couple at

- Carrot River and Clint and Nikki Hartog as youth pastor couple at Herbert.
- The chartering service for Faith River Christian Fellowship Church in Saskatoon held in September was an awesome event. What a unique occurrence to include a baptism as part of the chartering service. Way to go!
- Meeting with Church leadership teams is always very rewarding. This year I met with Blaine Lake, Forest Grove, Lucky Lake, Prairie Winds, Waldheim and Woodrow.

6. Continuing Education

A number of pastors, along with myself, continue to work on completing a seminary degree. Education "on the run" is a great way to learn, but it certainly makes life very busy.

Highlights for myself include:

- A class on the Pauline Epistles. As part of that class, I was able to accomplish a life time dream to memorize the book of Philippians. Lots of review would be needed now to be able to recite the book again.
- At present, I am involved in a monthly reading and coaching class held in Saskatoon with Dr. Paul Magnus. The content centers around leadership development and 21st century church leadership and ministry. These classes which began in July will conclude in March.

LOOKING AHEAD - anticipations for 2006...

1. Regular Events

- We look forward to the Provincial Convention in March.
- New Pastors' Orientation (NPO) will take place in British Columbia at in April. I look forward to a wonderful time with some of our newest pastors. (April 6 - 7)
- The Canadian MB Convention takes place this summer in Calgary. This regular event takes place every other year. (July 6 - 8)
- The annual pastoral retreat happens in October. This year the retreat will take place at Dallas Valley Ranch Camp - a new location which will benefit those who live in the southern part of the Province. (October 1 - 4)
- The Leadership Forum is still "under construction" but I anticipate this event will take place again. (Probable date - November 18)

2. Special Events

- We anticipate the ordination of Tony Martens at Borden. We also anticipate the commissioning of a number of new pastors - it's exciting to dream of these events without even knowing who these pastors will be. God has them picked out!
- We also look forward to the recognitions of a number of pastors. A good number of pastors will reach significant marks of ministry this year! Right now we anticipate recognizing pastors for a cumulative total of 65 years of ministry!

3. Leadership Development

- The Leadership Development Team is working hard to help us focus on the multiplication of new leaders and new churches. We are already seeing fruit for their labor as leaders are being developed through internships and ongoing seminary education. Bursaries and grants have been given in the past year and we anticipate more of this in 2006.
- Churches can expect to be challenged and stretched as this team continues to explore what it means for our Conference to have a multiplication mindset.

4. Relationships and Partnerships

- What a thrill to work with Board of Church Extension and dream about a partnership ministry model in places like Wynyard.
- As denominational barriers come down, we find ourselves entering into new partnerships and relationships with churches, ministries and pastors who wish to find spiritual shelter under our doctrinal and relational "umbrella". We are still trying to picture how this will look, but it certainly seems to point to a greater concern for building the Kingdom of God rather than building our Denominational Kingdom.