

Board of Faith and Life Report

The board of faith and life plays two main roles in the life of the Saskatchewan MB Conference. We act as theological gatekeepers and work to support the health of our member churches. We work together with the churches to ensure that pastors coming into our conference are theologically sound and are a good fit with the ministries they may be moving into. We are involved in church mediation when we are asked to do so. This past year we had added responsibilities because of Ralph Gliege's four month sabbatical. Pat Dergousoff took care of clerical and administrative responsibilities, while our board watched over church related ones.

In fall we dealt with a couple of military related questions. How should a church approach a potential funeral with military connections and how should we relate to military personnel in our churches? The following policy resulted from these questions.

In John 12.35, when faced with the death of his friend Lazarus and with the grieving of his friends Mary and Martha, Jesus wept. He ministered to the needs of his friends. In the event that one or more of our churches faces a death due to military action, we are to follow Jesus' example. We are to weep with them. This means encouraging our member churches to walk with the family in the grieving process, from the first notification to the memorial service, to the days and months that follow.

When we look at the involvement of military families within our churches, we again follow the example of Jesus. In Matthew 8, Jesus did not reject the centurion; rather, he spoke highly of his faith and healed his child. In this spirit, we lovingly accept military families into our midst. We do not hide our confessional belief. We are opposed to war. However, we recognize that not everyone in our churches will agree with our entire confession of faith. We nevertheless continue to love them, accept them and encourage them to become more and more like Christ.

As we look to the future we want to address the theological and spiritual issues of our age.

- 1) We live in a hyper-sexual culture. How do we encourage and maintain sexual purity? How do we lovingly confront the problems of co-habitation, adultery, pornography and homosexuality?
- 2) War, conflict and violence are present between nations, in politics, homes and in leisure activities. How do we put our confessional peace position into practice? I am frequently reminded of the title to one of Chuck Colson's books, *How Now Shall We Live?*
- 3) Canada, and Saskatchewan in particular, has been blessed by God with more than we need. How can we be good stewards of all God has given us, from overseeing His creation to participating in a booming economy?
- 4) How can we as a board help our churches choose godly, Biblically-based and good-fitting pastors and leaders?

These questions are not new to us. Godly people have been wrestling with them since the advent of temple prostitutes, the death of Abel, the greed of the rich young ruler and the selection of Saul as King of Israel. We will try and be proactive, addressing the foundational spiritual needs that are at the base of all human issues. We also recognize a reactive response is also necessary, to address specific needs in particular as they arise within our midst.