

Board of Faith & Life Report

The Board of Faith and Life is given the responsibility for being the theological gatekeepers and overseeing church health in the province. One of the issues that is very fuzzy in our Conference is the issue of ordination. We know that we need leaders. We know that God sets aside leaders in the church. What is difficult to work through is the process by which the church and Conference recognize these leaders while still maintaining the priesthood of all believers. Typically ordination has been the process by which we recognize these leaders. The change in the pastoral position from lay-led volunteers to full-time paid positions has meant that most ordinations are for paid pastors. Does this fit with scripture? Does this fit with our Anabaptist background? We do not want to set up a separate class of people, for example a pastoral class, that is different from the rest of the church, yet God does set aside people as leaders. We are struggling to resolve this issue.

Another of the issues that we are working through is learning to discern what in our culture, both the religious culture and the secular culture, is wise for us to grasp onto and what should be ignored or resisted. The boundaries for this are set by scripture and are supported by the traditions of our church fathers and the wisdom of our elders. Not everything new is bad but not everything old is good either. Our discernment is rooted in the scriptures and we would encourage you as churches, as families, and as individuals to study and search the scriptures to make sure we are obedient with God's will. If we are not rooted in the scriptures we will be swept away by the whims of our culture. As we saw at the leadership forum in November, our culture presents us with both opportunities and with dangers. It is only through the wisdom of the Holy Spirit and the understanding of the scriptures that we can do this successfully.

We are very excited to see the Refocusing church process play a greater role in our conference. It will play a significant role in the health of the churches in our denomination. Anyone who has been through the Refocusing process as an individual will know it is intense and comprehensive. We are very thankful for the support of the national conference in this regard. This should lead to both more work and less for our board. More work because issues of importance will no longer be glossed over and conflicts will arise. Less work because the churches should be healthier as they process through these conflicts.

As a board we have actively worked alongside Ralph Gliege as various issues have presented themselves over the course of the past year. We are thankful for the unity that we have as we work alongside the Director of Church Ministries. We ask that God would continue to give us wisdom and discernment as we work with a variety of people and issues.

We are looking forward to the national study conference which will be held in Saskatoon in October of this year. The theme of the study conference is Christology. More details will be coming in the future.

On behalf of the Board ,

Tony Martens

Chairman