



Video Update – June 2015
Willy Reimer, CCMBC Executive Director

Hi, my name is Willy Reimer and I'm the executive director of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches and it's good to be with you again in our video format. It's so exciting, again, to see what God is doing across our country.

One of things we've been praying about for quite a number of years and I know have been on the hearts of many people is how do we become more of a Spirit-led movement of churches? How do you move a denomination that's seen as being an institution – or we perhaps think about it that way – to being a Holy Spirit-led movement? We know that movements start with a deep sense of renewal among God's people. It's as God's people cry out to God for His presence, for His leading. And as they step forward in obedience to the Spirit's leading that often God works in new and amazing ways among us. We see Him move in ways we could never orchestrate, we could never plan, we could never strategize on a piece of paper.

In the first century, we see this happen as, of course, the disciples begin to take up the cause, as the Holy Spirit is poured out in the book of Acts, and they begin to preach and proclaim the Word of God boldly. They're thrown in prison and they rejoice over it. And at one of those points in Acts Chapter 5, where they're thrown in prison and they're released from prison, and they're out preaching again as they were released miraculously. Then they're again captured, as we would expect to happen.

And the Sanhedrin and the leaders are concerned; they want to kill the disciples. And Gamaliel steps up in a prophetic word, and says, "If this is the hand of God, we better be careful otherwise we are fighting against God."

And the disciples are flogged and then they go out and preach some more. And they celebrate that they could be flogged and beaten for the sake of the gospel. And then they go out and preach the Word much more boldly.

Well, how does that happen? It happens because the Spirit of God is real. It's because they're infused with the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. And they are more concerned about Jesus and His message and people meeting Him than anything else.

As Mennonite Brethren, we increasingly desire – I hear pastors and lay leaders and just church attenders across the country – continue to say, "Oh, we pray for the pouring out of the Spirit. We pray that the Spirit of God would infuse our local congregation. We pray that the Spirit would move across our congregations across the country. We pray that the Spirit of God would move in dynamic ways across denominations for the sake of the lost and the discipling of the found in Canada.

And so we continue to step into that and walk in that. I would just encourage you to pray for renewal in your own heart, in your own life; that you would be open to the working of the Spirit and follow the promptings of the Spirit to step out in faith, in risk... whether that's with a friend, or in a sacrificial way as the Spirit leads you to do that.

One of the great challenges we have in Canada is that most of our evangelical churches are suburban churches, they're middle-class churches. The values of suburbia are comfort, security and independence. That's why we moved to the suburbs. I live in the suburbs. I like those values. My problem is I can't find them in Scripture anywhere.

And so, Scripture flies in the face of many of the values that drive Western culture. And I think this is the time in history when we are being called to re-examine the things that we hold dear. And for the gospel to become not just a good idea, not just something that we receive personal salvation from and through, but rather something that transforms us radically. And it's in following Jesus wherever He takes us, however He moves us, as we walk in obedience [that] we will see the movement from an institution to a movement of God led by the Spirit.

And so I invite you in that journey together. This is something that God is challenging me in personally – as I examine my own life, how I live, how we live as a family, how we spend our money, how we use our time... Because God is doing something that is new, pervasive I believe, in Canada, throughout denominations, and is at the heart of what I believe it means to be Mennonite Brethren.