



Video Update – August 2016
Willy Reimer, CCMBC Executive Director

Hi everyone! I'm Willy Reimer, Executive Director of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches. We've just wrapped up Gathering 2016 in Toronto. And you can hear the noise in the background as people still mingle about, as friends are saying goodbye after being together here for the last couple of days in Toronto.

During our time here, we've been able to be together and pray, worship, be inspired by our speakers, to do business and to come together on some pretty significant motions that we needed to process and some financial considerations that I want to unpack for you a little bit.

So, the other night, we had a night of worship in downtown Toronto at St. Paul's Anglican Church. [This was] after we walked through the city – literally – on prayer walks and [saw] ministries to the various parts of Toronto. Ministry to our different immigrant communities, ministry to Muslim folks, ministry to Hindi and Punjabi folks, ministry to the urban core. It was very exciting to see how God is working in this great global city here in Toronto.

We were inspired by our speakers to think about how we step into ministering. Phil Collins inspired us with the story of the good Samaritan and [how] it is continually inviting us to not step over but to step in – in the leading of the Spirit, sacrificially giving of ourselves, as we minister in whatever community we find ourselves in.

I invite you to consider that. Go back to that story of the good Samaritan. Think about how God is leading you to opportunities when you maybe want to push back, when you maybe say, "Man, that's too much work.... That's just too inconvenient." But the Spirit of the Lord keeps pulling and compelling you to be someone who engages in the work of the Spirit as God leads you to people. We were challenged so wonderfully with that.

The opening night of Gathering 2016, Vic Neufeld from Winnipeg spoke to us about Christ's compelling sacrifice. He unpacked how Jesus is the one who sacrificed first, and what that means for us. What does that look like in the midst of our struggles to be Christ followers? In the midst of our struggles to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ and the inadequacies and insecurities that we feel? He did a great job of that!

We moved the next day to Janet Thiessen from Langley, B.C., who talked about how Christ works out the call and the gospel in community, and what that looks like for us.

We had Laurence East speak to us from Metro church in Kelowna, B.C. This is a church that has both the “up and out” and the “down and out.” It deals with street people as well as suburbanites who come and try to grapple with their faith in this difficult context. They’ve seen many people pass away from very difficult circumstances in their lives. He called us to obedience. “Compelled by obedience”: what does that look like? How are we willing to engage in very difficult circumstances where we might not be comfortable? He did a wonderful work with that.

Chris Stevens from Waterloo Mennonite Brethren Church talked about “compelled to discipleship.” How do we engage in discipleship processes of being disciples and disciple makers? Chris did a great job of sharing how WMB does that, how we can engage in that and how we can think about that in our own context.

That service was followed up by an offering for people to come up and receive prayer. Many people came and received prayer for being disciples and for being disciple makers. They just submitted their lives and their hearts to Jesus Christ.

All of these talks are available on GMMiTV and you can watch them in their fullness. We invite you to engage with Gathering 2016 by watching the great messages that were given on GMMiTV.

At Gathering 2016, one of the realities we had to face was that we need to replenish our financial reserves. To try to find a balance between replenishing reserves and supporting ministry. We have been using reserves that have been set aside for ministry to fund and fuel missional ministry and to kick-start that. But now, we have come to the place where we need to pull back on using those reserves and we actually need to rebuild our financial reserves. That reality means that we have to manage a budget that is getting smaller in 2017 and in 2018.

I would ask you to take a look at the documents that have been sent out to churches because really the ministry of CCMBC and the ministry of supporting the local church – on the ground in the local context – is [only] possible because of church giving. We invite you to consider how your church can engage in that.

We are so excited about what God is doing across the country and how churches are availing themselves of the resources of leadership development, church multiplication, building community and resourcing churches. But it’s incumbent on us to work together to resource our churches across the country. We look forward to having more communication with you in the coming year.