



**Video Update – September 2016**  
**Willy Reimer, CCMBC Executive Director**

Hi! My name is Willy Reimer. I'm the Executive Director of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.

Today I want to talk to you a little bit about discipleship. It sounds like such a mundane topic, in the sense that we all talk about discipleship. And yet, at the very heart, at the very core of who we are as Christ followers, we are disciples; we are followers of Jesus. When we unpack that and everything that it means, signifies and implies for our lives, it's incredibly significant.

It begins with the fact that we do follow Jesus: a personal, intimate relationship with Jesus. We follow him, we pursue him, we walk with him, he leads us through the power of the Spirit. It's not just someone we identify with – it's actually much more intimate than that. Our lives are oriented around what it means to be a Christ follower. Our values, our visions, our dreams, our behaviours, everything that we look at in life is focused around that.

Secondly, we are also called to be a united, distinct community as Christ followers. Being a Christ follower was never meant to be a private matter. It's a *personal* matter, but it's never private. And we are a collective. We are the people of God – not the individuals or the persons of God – we are the *people* of God.

That community has some very distinct characteristics. We walk in mutual care, mutual submission, mutual accountability. We call each other to encourage each another, to lift each other up – as Christ followers – to live out the words and deeds of Jesus. That distinct community is where the Kingdom reality comes to roost. We are part of the Kingdom of God, as the Bible tells us, but we live that out as Kingdom people. That shows up in economics, in justice, in care, in teaching and in understanding the personal and corporate impact of applying the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. These are incredibly important concepts for us to understand as Christ followers.

In Acts 2:42–47, we have the best picture of a disciple-making church. The passage there says:

*All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals, and to prayer. A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshipped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity – all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved (NLT).*

It's this marvelous picture of the church that we aspire to. Our hope as the Canadian conference, with all the things that we try to bring as resources to the local church, is to help churches in the local mission of being disciple makers and being disciple-making churches. It is our desire to bring everything we have to the table, whether it's around leadership development, church assessment, coaching, church multiplication or even our financial resource training and services. All with the mindset of saying, "How can we help churches make disciples?" Because that is the ministry of the local church. That is what we want to encourage. We would love to talk to you if you have any questions about that or if you would like for us to come alongside you, in being a disciple-making church.

In the fall of 2017, we will have our next Study Conference, which has been renamed as Equip 2017, and the focus will be discipleship. As we come together to study the Word of God, to understand the implications of what Jesus called us to, what he taught us, what Scriptures teach us about what that means in our world, which is an unsettled world and needs the manifest presence of God through the people of God to be reflected very clearly, to bring the hope of the world, which is Jesus Christ.

I'm excited about that, and I want to encourage you as you think about this coming year: what does it mean to be a follower of Jesus – a disciple? What does that mean for the community that you're a part of? How does that walk and live itself out in every nook and cranny of your life?

I want to encourage you to continue to press into Christ, and invite others with you on that journey because we never walk as disciples alone. We need each other to walk in the power and the presence of the Holy Spirit.