

CoVid19 has changed everyone's life, but we remain "rock solid" on the promise that Jesus Christ is the *Alpha and Omega, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty*" (Revelation 1:8).

Current Issues:

1. **MB Identity:** What does it mean for each ABMB church (and its leaders) to belong to this particular family; how are decisions made and what values are promoted? The theological grid or biblical hermeneutic that is applied has been a determinant for the temperature of engagement or dissent among some of our churches. MB identity has been a source of division for some of our churches who differ with our Confession, while for others it is the fresh wind of unity and engagement.
2. **Future Directions:** We continue to invest in two primary areas: 1) new Canadian congregations who want to belong to a church family like ABMB; 2) and encouraging churches as they call out the next generation of Christian leaders for the church and marketplace; we aim to do this alongside our churches and partnering agencies. Church planting is taking on a bit of a different strategy as we work toward "local missions". We aim to assist the local church in their local mission field; intentional church planting will be a result.
3. **Collaborative Model:** Collaboration has multiple layers, nationally coordinating efforts while provincially working together for common purposes. Collaboration will take on greater shape into the coming year now that nationally we have come to better understand the implications.
  - a. **Theology:** Our credentialing team continues to work hard at relationally working with new pastors, while occasionally being called on to assist churches in theological matters. Our discussions on Baptism and Membership (Confession Article 8) have created healthy dialogue and better understanding.
  - b. **Leadership:** We are excited to have a Multiply mobilizer appointed for Alberta to work at nurturing and creating leadership and missional opportunities alongside our local churches and leaders, while networking with our camp, seminary, and college.
  - c. **Mission:** Alberta is a mission field with significant cultural and national diversity. We are developing a team of "local missionaries" who will work with our churches to encourage and resource them for mission in their local contexts. Church planting will be an intentional outcome.
4. **Risk Factors:** We have one church that has gone through a serious split and we expect this matter to come to clarity and a measure of mutual understanding within the next few months. We continue to closely monitor a few other emerging churches (plants and "diaspora" congregations) who need strong partnering churches to guide them through their early years. We are encouraged by the level of significant involvement by our pastors and church leaders in various ministries and will continue to grow these areas.
5. **Financial Factors:** We continue to monitor our finances closely. While we were nearly realized our budget for church support and donation revenue, our expenses were also higher than expected, resulting in a small deficit. We have no reserves and so this year will likely be a watershed year for us. Early indicators for this year are that church support may remain similar to last year, but the effects of the pandemic may not yet have impacted our support from our churches. We remain committed to supporting MB Canada at 30% of the revenue we receive from ABMB churches.

**Looking Ahead:** This is a season in which we must stop, wait and “listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.” There are a few things that we will be called upon to be and do:

1. If ABMB is to move forward with greater impact, we will continue to address our tendency to “do it alone.” We must break this “pioneering” and independent ethos that has been with us in Alberta. We need each other like we haven’t needed each other for many years!
2. Reliance on Sunday as a primary “discipling event” may give way in this current context to some new ways of thinking about how we make disciples. Equipping disciple-makers will require personal attention and care.
3. We will learn how to do more with less, and this will include getting back to a lot of the basics. I’m excited to see how churches are beginning to think differently and act in greater productive ways.
4. We need to pay more attention to “what the Spirit has to say to our churches”. God is speaking and lessons are being delivered. A faithful response (obedience) to what God is doing is imperative.

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