

It's not about the conference ...

... and it's most certainly not about me!

But, seeing my time as moderator drawing to a close put me in a reflective mood. I curiously dug out my application to join the Executive Board. What motivated my board involvement in our MB family of churches back in the summer of 2016? The answer I gave four years ago, still passionately drives me today – *discipleship in the local church*. What a thrill to watch people *first* discover how great God really is! What a great adventure to see transformation in Jesus as we walk together in obedience to His Spirit's invitations in our lives!

A conference, or a family of churches such as ours, is simply a means to connect our local church stories to God's bigger story in the world, and to do so in a way that leverages our unique gifts for a larger impact. The conference matters a great deal - but it's not about the conference - it's about the local church.

For me, it's always been about the local church ...

Some time ago, someone asked me, "What would you do to change the world?" I thought about it for a while, and then responded, "I would serve and lead in a local church."

What could be a better vehicle to experience community, the love of Jesus, the ability to sharpen, train and encourage one another, serving others, and proclaiming the hope of the gospel with our words and with our lives? What better place than the local church ... with all its blemishes, weaknesses, faults (read "people") ... but also all its beauty, wonder, and possibility (read "people"). What an honour to join messed up, broken people, filled with the Spirit of God, called to the mission of God, compelled by the love of God, to proclaim Jesus to the world ... *starting right where we live*.

The letter to the Ephesians is the best church leadership manual I know (I'd like to quote the whole letter – but you can read it). There is one portion of this beautiful text that intrigues me, compels me, seems elusive to me and yet continually draws me back.

What an honour to join messed up, broken people ... in the mission of a local church... and explore the beauty, wonder and possibility that God has for us together.

Ephesians 4:11-13: *So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

What would it look like for the church to truly live into this? Why is it that we seem to swing from one era of gift emphasis to another, instead of embracing them all in maturity? What would a functioning expression of this look like in a local church?

As I conclude my second term as moderator, and transition out of this role, here are five things I'm going to do my best to continue:

1. Keep on loving and supporting conference people, just as I have experienced, as we pursue Jesus together with vastly different perspectives. *(Is it ok to admit this will be a tiny bit easier with some than others?)*
2. Trying to remember that simplicity is a gift I too often unintentionally exchange for complexity. *(Especially when I want to add those last three points that I think will make this plan stronger).*
3. Focusing! To not be so easily distracted by novelty in our discipleship strategies. Simple, clear discipleship strategies, leveraged for the long haul ... will be the most powerful in the long term.
4. Reminding myself that we don't need perfection (which often leads to paralysis), we need simple clarity led by people being transformed by Jesus.
5. Telling everyone who will listen that local, effective discipleship can only happen as we lift our eyes to the world. Local, national, global connections are critical. *(I can get consumed with navel-gazing as well as anyone)*

Thank you for entrusting me to lead in this role for these four years. What a blessing to work with such great people on our board and staff! I look forward to what God will do through the local church... connected through our conference (MB family).

Ephesians 3: 20-21: *Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.*

I love you all...

Bruce Enns

Together... helping multiply healthy leaders and disciple-making churches



Elton, you have been a strong beacon guiding our conference through turbulent times. May we ignore our natural tendencies and go all in with you on collaboration in every way.



Ron, blessings on you as you take on the responsibilities of moderator (upon delegate approval). My prayer is that you will be able to accomplish infinitely more than you might ask of God or even think.