



ONMB Report to National Assembly



When we gathered for our 89th Annual Convention in NOTL on February 21 & 22, we had no idea that it would be one of our last group gatherings for the foreseeable future. Danielle Strickland our keynote speaker brought depth to the 'Holistic Gospel Presence' theme, challenging us to lead courageously amidst chaos and inspiring us to seize 'this moment'. How timely and prophetic.

By March 15th, as COVID-19 was shuttering our churches and we were learning about the new phenomenon "social distancing", we discovered that life as we knew it was changing. New ways to share the message of Jesus were needed immediately. For some, this is a thrilling new opportunity, embraced with creativity and passion. For others it is much more challenging, forcing a season of retooling. If we are honest, all of us have experienced periods of confusion, anxiety and for some even paralysis. But there are signs of hope that although life may never quite be what it was, a bright future of effective ministry is emerging. Some highlights include:

***Reimagining Ministry:** We are experimenting with online retreats (tested by our Leaders Collective cohort), creatively developing online worship experiences, and discovering a new passion for reaching our neighbors with the love of Jesus. The DMM (Disciple-Making Movements) training is being tested in several contexts led by Derek Parenteau and members from Multiply. A collection of leaders, both ONMB staff and local pastors are attempting to discover new methods to ignite church planting, propel leadership development (in particular with MB Seminary), and reach the marginalized in life-giving ways.

***Collaboration:** This moment has propelled the National Ministry Team to actively live into the Collaborative Model. Since the pandemic is touching every part of Canada and the world, it has created space for each province and ministry to offer gifts and resources at our collective table. Evidence of this is seen in the town hall meetings resourcing our churches as well as the renewed focus on national and global prayer. One highlight was participating with 400+ Zoom participants for the Good Friday communion service.

***Financial Crunch:** In Ontario we have seen the generosity of our churches grow year over year for the past 6 years. Much like many of you, the implications that COVID-19 will have on our financial situation is unclear, but our ONMB Board and staff are doing all they can to mitigate any potential shortfall. We believe that our generous God will continue to provide all our needs in these days. We are also leaning into the one stream funding model that we have adopted and will do all we can to carry through with our agreed upon commitments.

***Family Covenant and Five-Year Strategic Plan:** Our desire to draw our churches together as a covenant family remains as strong as ever, as we continue to adjust both our strategies and objectives to the changing reality of COVID-19 and its impact on our shared communities. This year's intended focus on "Holistic Gospel Presence" seems so timely. We are trusting that God will make it clear how we can best respond with and as his presence, in these days and the year ahead.

***Eyes of Faith:** We take inspiration from Paul's challenge to the Corinthian church also living in chaotic times: "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So, we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal... For we live by faith, not by sight... So we make it our goal to please him!" 2 Cor. 4:16-18; 5:7,9a

