

# CCMBC Annual Update 2015

## The Gifts of 2015

We, the MB churches of Canada, were given two great gifts in 2015. I know you're probably thinking, "Really? What were they?" The two gifts were questions:

1. What is the glue that binds Canadian Mennonite Brethren together?
2. Are we committed to our confession of faith?

How did these questions surface? The first was a byproduct of the conversations around the future and purpose of the *Herald* as revealed through the communications survey. The second was a byproduct of the Human Sexuality Study Conference which created concern for some, fear and anger for others, and opportunity for leadership.

Why would I call these issues gifts? Because, they have given us the opportunity to assess and articulate the purpose of our communication and our theological center. We are in the midst of reviewing a national communication strategy to meet the historic needs while also engaging those who are new to our churches and our younger generation, all for the fulfillment of our mission. The second gift is the opportunity to articulate our theological center around our confession of faith. The Board of Faith and Life and the Executive Board are fully committed to the Bible as the infallible Word of God and the authoritative guide for faith and practice. We are committed to upholding our historical biblical definition of marriage as a covenant relationship intended to unite a man and a woman for life. We are committed to the teaching that sexual intimacy rightfully takes place only within marriage between a woman and a man.

Given our rapidly changing sociopolitical landscape and theological ambiguity, the integrity of our message and the effectiveness of our mission are rooted in a common theological identity and a common mission. I am grateful that we have the opportunity to clarify what we believe and to clarify the mission we work together to accomplish.

Thank you for your prayer support, and please continue pray for our churches to have a missionary heart for local, provincial, national and global people who do not know Jesus Christ. Thank you for your financial support of provincial and national ministry. Your faithful contributions are starting new churches, supporting the leaders and church revitalization, and supporting ministries such as MBBS, MB Mission, ETEQ and ICOMB.

## Ministry Model

In 2015, the increasing ministry partnership between the Ontario and national conferences strengthened our mission "to multiply Christ-centred churches to see Canada transformed by the good news of Jesus Christ." At a September meeting of all provincial staff leaders, a common ministry model was approved.

While Ontario adopted this model a year earlier, the agreement across the provinces enables us to align our service delivery and resources across Canada. The work of L2L in developing leaders is a good example. The L2L coaching tools are shared across the country with some 285 people receiving training in coaching, 51 in Ontario. We are excited about this new level of partnership and how we can work together to serve the MB churches of Canada.



Willy Reimer  
Executive Director



Ed Willms  
Executive Director



# DEVELOPING LEADERS

## Developing Disciples and Leaders

To what degree do you resonate with the following eight statements?

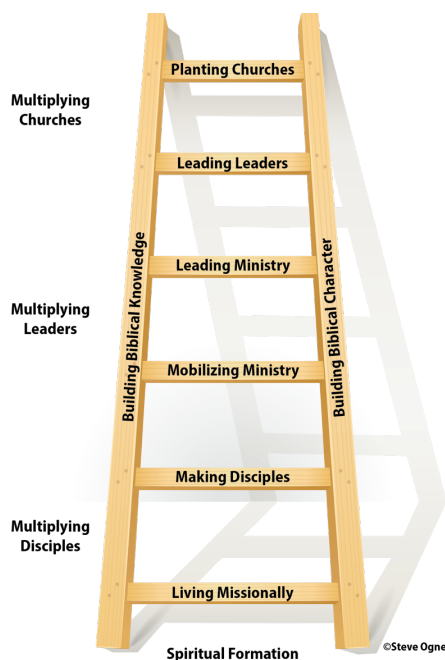
1. The local church is as missional as her disciples.
2. Participating in church programs equals discipleship.
3. The church is less than she ought to be if she doesn't make disciples.
4. The local church can outsource disciple-making.
5. Discipleship and leadership are interdependent.
6. The need for more pastors and church planters is somebody else's problem.
7. There's a distinction between serving in a ministry and leading others.
8. Churches on mission develop multiplying disciples and leaders.

According to the CCMBC 2015 Transformation survey, half of our churches have an intentional discipleship process in place and believe it is working. And about one in four churches (28%) strategically identifies and develops future leaders.

Since the local church is the litmus test of our current collective effectiveness, we must admit that we have more work to do.

The image of a ladder portrays the local church as the ideal environment for people to grow in their spiritual character and biblical knowledge as part of their spiritual formation. Are you and your church creating the kind of environments where disciples and leaders grow and thrive?

L2L's prayer and ministry this year are focused on depicting biblical disciple-making and leadership development pathways that can serve the local church well on her Christ-given mission.



Here are some questions to encourage prayerful reflection and conversation in your church or context:

- What parts of the ladder are strongly in place?
- What parts of the ladder are broken or missing?
- What parts of the ladder are confusing?
- What part of your ladder is God currently working on?
- What changes is God calling you to make?
- Who do you need to depend on to make this change?
- Which rung have you neglected personally?
- What transformation do you need before leading others?

## Coaching Leaders and Churches

L2L's passion remains the development of a coaching culture, where life-on-life interactions regularly help leaders (Coach Me) and churches (Coach Us) become attentive to God's desires and purposes, and enable them to live out this mandate in everyday ways. Over the past two years, L2L trained about 300 leaders in using coaching skills in their discipleship and leadership conversations.

In an effort to raise the level of competency for our coaches and the quality of our coaching, we're moving toward equipping a smaller number of trainers but with more rigorous training and experience. This move enables us to use existing training materials in other languages such as French, Spanish, German, which is crucial as we serve in Quebec and work with international ministry partners like MB Mission. It also allows us to offer flexible 1-, 2-, or 3-day coach training for leaders in the marketplace, in church, and serving on various boards.

## L2L Dashboard (Cumulative 2014–15)

53	churches coached through an assessment and their implementation of disciple-making and leadership development pathways
120	small groups discussing their current learning interests at L2Lnet.org
301	leaders trained in applying coaching skills
101	leaders L2L is coaching or has coached
14	network events with camping directors, presidents of theological schools, transitional pastors
323	resources discovered or developed for leaders and churches
674	leaders developed through APEX, Personal ReFocusing, etc.
180	active leaders in the L2Lnet.org online community (overall leaders who signed up = 609)
\$53,103	awarded to 35 recipients through Leadership Training Matching Grants
670	GoToMeetings online video meetings
12	denominations served
11	transitional pastors supported

# MULTIPLYING CHURCHES

The C2C Network is praying for more labourers, and God is answering by bringing many qualified planters into every region. As the Lord of the Harvest is sending, we are responding (Luke 10:2).

Prayer is at the forefront of C2C for 2016. This is the time for complete surrender and complete dependence on the power of prayer. We are praying for labourers, and we are praying for God to accomplish his will for his glory.

*Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen*

(Ephesians 3:20–21 ESV)

The C2C Network exists to glorify God and make disciples by planting and multiplying gospel-centred churches and enabling new missional opportunities. The bottom line is that we want to see more people come to faith in Jesus Christ. We do that by coming alongside both individuals and churches to enable church planting wherever they have a vision to expand the gospel's impact.

Derek of Rugged Tree recently had a breakthrough. On a difficult reserve, the only Christian is an isolated elder. A Native agency asked Derek to visit her. When he arrived, she tearfully explained how she's been praying for a church planter. Derek is helping her start a Faith Circle in her residence.

The Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches has a heart for the advancement of God's kingdom. People have been impacted by the call and confidence to work with other denominations to see lives transformed and the glory of God magnified. This calling is creating a heart of unity and drawing God's people together in spite of denominational lines. Mennonite Brethren and C2C are uniquely positioned by the Lord to be at the vanguard of this movement of God.

## Top Ten Highlights of 2015

- 2271 prayer partners
- 271 baptisms among C2C churches
- 103 church planters in the C2C Network
- 59 training events
- 25 planters assessed
- 15 new church plants
- 8 church plants in the Atlantic region, with the newest in Newfoundland
- 7 church plants "graduated" to become established churches
- 5 new apprentices (22 total)
- 2 new regional directors (Trevor Seath in Ontario, Chad MacDonald in Atlantic Canada)

# BUILDING COMMUNITY

## Board of Faith and Life

In 2015, the Board of Faith and Life (BFL) released the French translation of our Confession of Faith and started work on a Chinese translation, continued updates of the Faith and Life pamphlet series, moved toward the completion of a statement regarding ordination, planned the October study conference and responded to questions on matters of life and faith. In addition, the BFL began work on designing a process for updating some language in the articles of our Confession of Faith in response to feedback from the 2015 pastoral survey.

The mandate of the BFL is to build community by strengthening of our theological identity as Mennonite Brethren. The fall 2015 study conference illustrated the increasing breadth of hermeneutical approaches and our ongoing need for articulating our theological centre. The BFL is committed to guarding the

Mennonite Brethren theological convictions with a renewed intentionality and to developing resources and processes to address points of disagreement.

## Communications Survey

In 2015, 6p Marketing was commissioned to carry out a survey of *MB Herald* readers to learn about items such as the types of content and effective mediums, and how these differ by age group. A key finding of this research was the importance of the *Herald* to building a shared sense of MB identity and community. The *Herald* plays an important role in the Building Community ministry.

The survey results indicated that the three most valuable types of content sought by readers are stories on other Canadian MB churches, theological explanations of issues from an MB perspective, and reports on missions and outreach. The desire and need for content is similar across all age groups but different mediums are required to deliver it.

## Communications Survey cont.

By conducting this survey, we learned that the *Herald's* content is seen as valuable to a wide range of age groups. Going forward, active promotion along with additional mediums are required in order to reach a younger demographic. There is

potential to have it grow and reach more of the church body through a mix of print and online/ digital mediums.

(Additional details regarding the survey results can be found at [mbherald.com](http://mbherald.com) and [gmmitv.com](http://gmmitv.com))

## RESOURCING MINISTRY

An annual review is always a balance of identifying the accomplishments and recognizing the missed opportunities. 2015 was certainly a learning experience and one of the most fulfilling years of my career. I also recognize there were many opportunities to do more.

During the year, our first focus was developing strong relationships between our team and our partners, which include MB churches, provincial conferences and staff, the finance committee, the Executive Board, the members of CCMBC and affiliated organizations. It became clear that this would take a substantial effort; it will be an ongoing focus for myself and the finance team.

The second focus for 2015 was to follow the recommendations of the membership to create CCMBC Legacy Fund Inc. We have made progress on this initiative, but it has been slower than we would have liked. The project received formal approval at the Annual General Meeting in October, and we believe that the project will move along more quickly in 2016.

During the year, CRA completed an audit through the end of the 2012 fiscal year. They did not identify any issues, and they provided six recommendations to improve our reporting to CRA. We agree with the recommendations and have implemented five of the six items. The last will be implemented early in 2016.

We have continued to support churches and conferences with our accounting and payroll services and our benefits and pension plans. These accounting services include the following:

- Payroll services for 178 churches, camps, schools and MB agencies
- Benefits for 224 churches, camps, schools and MB agencies
- Benefit plan for 1,044 individuals
- Pension plan supporting 1,364 individuals, of which 784 are active contributors
- Accounting services for 2 provincial conferences, 6 established churches and 12 non-registered church plants

As we continue to support churches and pastors by providing mortgages, we work to be excellent stewards, following Matthew 25:14–30: to grow what God has graciously entrusted to us. During 2015, we managed 151 mortgages totaling \$110,753,337.

It is our goal to continue this ministry in 2016: to grow our people and to invest in the relationships with all our partners.

Please continue to pray for the finance team as they work to serve you. We also ask for prayers for the Conference to continue to support the ministries that we provide and that we are able to gather the financial resources necessary to provide the services. - Jim Davidson, interim CFO

## Church Giving

