

ONMB Report to National AGM

A month into this pandemic, a poem entitled “Exposed” came to my attention:

“We’ve all been exposed.
Not necessarily to the virus
(though maybe...who even knows).
We’ve all been exposed BY the virus.

Corona is exposing us.
Exposing our weak sides.
Exposing our dark sides.
Exposing what normally lays far beneath
the surface of our souls,
hidden by the invisible masks we wear...”

[Read the full poem: by Sarah Bourns](#)

This poem resonated in my heart as a prophetic reminder of the idols that often lurk in our lives keeping us from our first love. It is a call to reassess our spiritual practices and the ways in which we express our lives as disciples of Jesus. Although we are still figuring this out, this season has been an opportunity to look afresh at what God is doing in our day.

Like other parts of the country, several of our churches have remained closed while others have pivoted many times in attempting to stay within the provincial regulations. Our Camp’s normal summer functions were all curtailed, while our Leaders Collective program was adversely affected and as a result a new cohort did not start.

Regardless of the challenges, the power of the gospel and the vitality of the church has moved forward. We’ve learned a new way to connect with each through numerous virtual platforms. Most churches have enhanced or birthed an on-line presence, often with great success. Amazingly, a few church planting efforts have begun or continued in spite of the pandemic.

This year we had great plans to celebrate our 90th AGM. Although we had to revise initial dreams and hopes, we discovered that a virtual attempt worked quite well and allowed us to engage a larger group than we would have seen in person.



In the meetings we were able to adopt an entirely revamped Bylaw revision which we trust will position us for strategic growth in the years ahead. We experienced remarkable generosity from our people as most of our churches have remained financially fit. That translated into the strongest year of financial support to ONMB in the past decade. We are so grateful. We were even able to welcome two new churches to our family: Northend Church in Niagara and Manotick Community Church in the Ottawa area.

This year we began to really press into our national collaborative efforts. The National Ministry Team met numerous times, worked through countless challenging efforts, and is positioned to propose the CUSP (collaborative unified strategic plan). Our unified efforts also allowed us to offer two ‘wellness seminars’ to serve our leaders in these challenging days.

As we look to this next year, our hope is to develop several teams to assist our collaborative efforts. In particular we will be establishing a missional church planting team to reimagine our church expansion efforts. It is also our hope to create a leadership development team to more comprehensively address the growing need for new leaders in our midst.

I believe this is a Kairos moment (Greek for: an opportune moment in time for action). A time to reimagine what the church might look like in the future. A time to assess and rethink what our missional expressions should be moving forward. A time to engage with a growing number of Indigenous brothers and sisters. A time to reimagine our love and unity in these days of unprecedented polarization and division. My prayer is that we will not miss all that God has for us during this particular Kairos moment.

Ed Willms
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