

2021 NFLT Report for CCMBC

The National Faith and Life Team exists to articulate and safeguard Mennonite Brethren theological convictions, produce theological and pastoral resources, and provide discernment and guidance on current issues. We continue to serve the MB churches of Canada in the area of strengthening the Canadian MB identity and community.

Although our global pandemic has shut down initiatives all around us and slowed life for many, that has not been the experience for the NFLT. Along with most everyone else, our team—consisting of church leaders from BC to Nova Scotia—shifted to online meetings in order to continue moving forward with our mission and responsibilities.

The following represents the bulk of our work during the past year:

MB Confession of Faith

- We have completed our recommended revision to **Article 8 on Baptism** which began in Fall of 2018. We have heard from many individuals and churches, and recommend it for final approval.
- We have also produced **Explanatory Notes** and **Responses to FAQs** to assist anyone in our MB family to better understand Article 8—especially those who want to teach and preach these convictions more effectively. (These will replace what were formerly called **Commentary** and **Pastoral Application**.)
- We have updated the MB Confession’s “Brief Edition” and renamed it a “**Summary of the Confession of Faith**.” Since many congregations link to the Brief Edition on their websites, it needed to reflect the language and wording of the Full Edition more carefully.
- We are working on **translations** of our full Confession of Faith into more languages beyond what we have at present (viz., English, French, and Chinese). A Farsi translation is underway; and the Spanish translation is to be updated soon. Translations into a few Indigenous languages are also being considered.

MB Resources

- We are working on two pamphlets in response to **Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD)** legislation in Canada.
- We are writing materials that provide greater clarity about the biblical and theological foundations for our Confession of Faith’s convictions about human sexuality, and about how we can live out these convictions more lovingly to those who identify as **LGBTQ+** inside and outside of our congregations. Prompted by some of our Provincial Conferences and by letters we have received from concerned individuals, we recognize that this conversation is a priority for the MB family across Canada.
- During the **first wave of the pandemic**, the NFLT Director, Ingrid Reichard, gave leadership to national online prayer gatherings, coordinated an international MB Good Friday celebration, and offered resources to pastors through webinars, blog posts, and one-on-one support.
- We are working on coordinating **church membership policies** across provincial conferences to provide greater clarity.

Credentialing of Leaders

- We have done a thorough revision to our **Code of Personal and Ministry Ethics** for all MB credentialed leaders across Canada as all of us enter an era that requires greater shared clarity and vision for our national team of pastors and leaders.
- We launched an alternate credentialing process in partnership with our First Nations leaders, and are excited about the first candidates who are nearing completion of the process.
- We are in the process of considering how to better prepare applicants for credentialing, and how to invite credentialed leaders to effective and ongoing **professional development**.

Events

- Because of our desire to have the **Pastoral Credentialing Orientation (PCO)** as a live event, we have re-scheduled this Spring's two in-person events to Fall: October 27-29 in Ontario, and November 3-5 in BC.
- For similar reasons, **Equip Study Conference 2021** on ecclesiology has been postponed and will become **Equip Study Conference 2022**.

Earlier this year, we were informed that our NLFT Director and chairperson, Ingrid Reichard, would be on a short-term medical leave. Many individuals from within the NFLT have stepped up during her absence; but we very much look forward to Ingrid's return and her leadership of this Team.

Please pray for the women and men of your National Faith and Life Team—for the Holy Spirit's wisdom, courage, and creativity to carry out the task of assisting our MB family as we seek to be faithful to Jesus' mission in the world. Pray also that God will continue to send quality women and men to serve on this team and on each of the provincial faith and life teams.

Your servants in Christ,

Andrew Dyck, Karen West, and Ken Esau (The Interim NFLT Coordinating Team)

On behalf of the MB National Faith and Life Team