



NFLT AND NFL DIRECTOR REPORT FOR 2025 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

MANDATE

According to the Collaborative Unified Strategic Plan (CUSP), we as a Conference exist *“to cultivate a community and culture of healthy disciple-making churches and ministries, faithfully joining Jesus in his mission.”* The National Faith and Life Team (NFLT) exists to articulate and safeguard Mennonite Brethren theological convictions, produce theological and pastoral resources, and provide discernment and guidance on current issues. The National Faith and Life Team stewards the Confession of Faith on behalf of the Conference.

Activities in 2024

This has been a very full year for me, but I experienced it with much joy because of the excellent National Faith and Life Team members, CCMBC Staff, and those on the National Ministry Team and Executive Board. I’m thankful to be part of all of these teams of deeply committed men and women of godly character. They are an inspiration and encouragement to me each and every day. Over the course of 2024, we said good-bye to Karen West (ONMB Provincial Rep), Rob Thiessen (BCMB Conference Minister), Doug Heidebrecht (Multiply Rep), and Rick Schellenberg (SK Provincial Rep). We were very thankful for these faithful team members and wish them God’s best in their new endeavors.

Some of the NFLT highlights for 2024 include:

- We produced a monthly **“Contending in Prayer”** resource that revolved around encouraging different types of prayers throughout the year (viz., gratitude prayers; blessing prayers; confession prayers; etc.).
- We gave final approval to **Article 3: Creation and Humanity** (Explanatory Notes); **Article 4: Sin and Evil** (Explanatory Notes) and **Article 6: Nature of the Church** (Explanatory Notes; Living the Confession [FAQs]) as part of our Confession of Faith Resource Revision Project.
- We are in the final approval stage for **Article 5: Salvation** (Explanatory Notes); **Article 7: Mission of the Church** (Explanatory Notes), and **Article 9: Lord’s Supper** (Explanatory Notes). These are presently on the [CCMBC website](#) inviting feedback.

- We gave final approval to our “Loving Well our Trans Neighbours, Friends, and Family” for distribution to our pastors and church leaders.
- We partnered with MB Seminary and BCMB to oversee the **Pastors Credentialing Orientation** May 28-30, 2024 at Columbia Bible College (Abbotsford) with about 70 participants. We agreed that in 2025, PCO would become a regional event alternating between west (BC/AB/SK) and east (MB/ON/QC) with shared planning and implementation from these provincial conferences.
- We made a decision to discontinue the publishing of new topics in our **NFLT Pamphlet Series** and evaluate our existing pamphlets for relevance and constituency demand.
- The NFLT spent some significant time discussing how we should navigate our 1999 and 2006 discussions around **women and church leadership roles**. We are continuing to talk about this in light of the reality of significant differences and perspectives across our national family. We do hope that all of CCMBC’s member organizations and local churches can encourage and facilitate leadership development for gifted women within their community.

Besides all of these more formal NFLT involvements, I enjoyed writing the **Q&R Corner** in the *MB Herald Digest* addressing such topics as Progressive Christianity (Feb); the Nature of Suffering in Hell (April); Burial or Cremation? (Aug); the Role of Israel Today (Oct); and Children Leaving the Faith (Dec). I also joined the *Direction* journal Editorial Council as CCMBC’s representative. The Fall 2024 issue was dedicated to the publication of presentations from Equip 2023 so I revised my **“Why Church?”** presentation and had it published there. Whenever possible, I try to say yes to serve in local churches and this year, I had the opportunity to teach a “From the Garden to the Desert: Genesis to Deuteronomy” summer course and an Old Testament Survey Fall course. These made my life very full but were very enjoyable.

While we celebrate all the highlights from 2024 (and thank God for so many answered prayers!), we continue to engage around the following items for 2025:

- Our CCMBC theme for 2025 is **“Pray First! Pray Always!”** so our monthly prayer column will have this new name. We will be working slowly through short phrases from the Lord’s Prayer each month. We have invited some new writers from across the country to contribute to the column.
- We are actively planning and anticipating an excellent **Equip 2025** conference from October 21-23 at NKMB Church, Winnipeg. Our theme is: **“The Gospel, Peacemaking, and the Kingdom: God’s Peace in an Age of Conflict, Chaos, and Confusion.”** More information [here](#).
- We have just completed the hosting of **PCO 2025: Getting to Know the Family!** (May 6-8, 2025) at Behta Darya Community Church (Mississauga, ON). It was a wonderful event getting to know many young (and less young) new leaders in our MB family!
- We continue to give significant effort to our **Confession of Faith Resource Revision Project** and hope to process new explanatory notes for **Article 10: Discipleship; Article 11: Marriage, Singleness, and Family; Article 12: Society and State; and Article 13: Love and Nonresistance.** (Articles 12 and 13 will be the special focus of Equip 2025.)
- We have been asked to work on other resources related to **Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD)** and about **divorce and remarriage**—especially in reference to pastors/leaders. It was deemed wise to wait for the completion of the Explanatory Notes on Article 14: Sanctity of Life and Article 11: Marriage, Singleness, and Family before addressing these topics. It is hoped that resources will become available for churches and pastors later in 2025.

My prayer is always that everything that I do and that we do together as a family would reflect faithfully the character and mission of King Jesus and God’s Kingdom. As we live into God’s Kingdom story of 2025, may we engage fully into the Lord’s Prayer, calling out to God to bring his Kingdom to earth as it is in heaven—and participating in disciple-making as a dimension of the Kingdom work in the world. Blessings and Shalom in Jesus as you pray and serve in your family, church, and community!

If you have suggestions, encouragements, or thoughts, feel free to email them to us at listeningwell@mbchurches.ca



Ken Esau

National Faith and Life Director

2025 NATIONAL FAITH AND LIFE TEAM

RICHARD LOUGHEED
AEFMQ Representative
RYAN JANTZI
ONMB Ministry Director
MATT UNRUH
ONMB Representative
CONNIE MAIER
NFLT Member-at-Large (ONMB)
JASON DYCK
MBCM Director of Church Ministries
VIC NEUFELD
MBCM Representative
PHIL GUNTHER
SKMB Director of Ministry
PAUL LOEWEN
ABMB Provincial Director
LAURENCE HIEBERT
ABMB Representative
REG TOEWS
BCMB Executive Director
KRISTAL TOEWS
Member-at-Large (BCMB)
KEITH REED
MB Seminary Representative
CAM STUART
CCMBC National Director
KEN ESAU
NFL Director

2025 PCO participants

