

# Alberta MB Conference

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***Cultivating a community and culture of healthy disciple-making churches and ministries***

March 2025, Report for the year ending 2024

*Colossians 2:7 "Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness."*

What a thrill to see churches deepen their walk with Christ and to intentionally and strategically go into their spheres of influence, their communities and workplaces, to bring the good news of Jesus Christ! Lives are being changed and communities are impacted.



## **Celebrating Ministry in 2024!**

Simply stated, the ministry of ABMB is to support churches and ministries in making disciples who make disciples. I believe we are gaining momentum through good health and intentional disciple-making practices. Many churches are reporting an increase in baptisms and attendance, with some pastors discerning how to scale their capacity—a great “problem” to solve!

We have much to celebrate!

- Churches are reporting growth again in 2024, with a year-over-year growth at an estimated 10% (as of this printing the final numbers are not available).
- We are currently “fully staffed” in our churches with lead pastors (except for one in the process of candidating), with no lead pastoral resignations for 2024.
- Church support for ABMB exceeded our 2024 budget.
- New churches continue to ask to join the ABMB family, with four currently in various stages of process.
- Youth are engaged in missions project and camp leadership opportunities.
- We have launched as a “beta” test a ministry school (Advance Academy of Ministry) with 15 initial students.

## **Working in His Kingdom**

Our province has been experiencing significant growth in the last number of years. With it come both challenges and opportunities. Challenges such as rapid neighborhood growth and often assimilating new people into the language and customs of our context. But with that also come many opportunities for ministry. Churches are providing English language learning and newcomer support. It is an incredible blessing to see churches who reflect the communities in which they are situated. It is truly a picture of the Kingdom!

## **Advance Academy of Ministry**

A significant portion of energy this past year has been focused on developing a ministry school for a new generation of Christian leaders. This resonated as a need within our churches in which many current leaders are aging out, churches facing young adult exodus, and the expense of a full-time onsite Bible College scenario is often prohibitive. We decided in fall of 2024 that we would start with a “beta test” in January and Feb of 2025, with the intent of running a full program for the fall. That goal is becoming a reality!

**Advance** Academy of Ministry (AAM) is shaped by the following vision:

- To provide an accessible Christian leadership training experience that disciples young leaders for kingdom service in the home, church, and marketplace.

The key values:

1. Relational Discipling: more than an education, the academy is designed to be discipling-driven.
2. Kingdom focus: The story of the God who invites us into His mission, with the Bible, prayer, and personal faith development as key components.
3. Mission priority: Practical opportunities to be involved in service and mission are an integral part of the learning model.
4. Church engagement: the local church is an active participant by sending, supporting, and receiving students who can serve and intern. Pastors will form the primary pool of teachers.
5. Student Accessibility: Financial concerns mark the most notable resistance to a Bible education. With high church involvement, a hybrid form of delivery (online and in-person), and a non-credit format, allow for a much-reduced cost structure.

ADVANCE Academy is focused on three primary outcomes:

1. Biblically equipped leaders for the home and community.
2. Ministry equipped lay leaders for the church and Christian ministries.
3. Missionally equipped marketplace influencers for Kingdom impact.

**Advance** Academy of Ministry registered 15 students for this first course, and most have indicated their desire to register for the fall program. The program will consist of a total of 5 courses for the year, each approximately 6 weeks in length (including a retreat weekend), with two courses in the fall, two in winter, and one in spring. Students within this cohort model will be expected to register for all 5 courses. A total of 18 students will be accepted for this first year. Applications will be open May 1<sup>st</sup>, with priority provided to students from the beta course, and those who are involved in ministry in their local context and commissioned by their local church.

### Outcomes for 2025 and beyond

As we move into 2025, we will continue to focus on *cultivating a community and culture of healthy disciple-making churches and ministries, faithfully joining Jesus in his mission*.

Pastors and churches are intentionally working together and collaborating with ideas, planning events, and offering mutual support.

I have been offered a sabbatical for this summer (May, June, July) and with it will come the benefit of deeper and broader engagement of pastors and leaders in the combined ministry of ABMB.

### To our SKMB Friends

ABMB continues to collaborate with SKMB when it is mutually beneficial. We continue to enjoy our friendship and working relationship with SKMB. Our Pastors Retreat in Banff this past fall (October 21-25) was a fantastic encouragement, and we anticipate our next one together in fall of 2026 will be even better (venue is already booked)! We believe that this combined effort adds to the richness of our MB family. Working with my colleague Phil Gunther is a privilege and a joy!

### Gathering 2025:

You are invited to join us for our **gathering** (convention) on April 11-12. [www.abmb.ca](http://www.abmb.ca)

**Annual General Meeting:** April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 7:00 – 9:00pm. Registrations at [www.abmb.ca](http://www.abmb.ca)