

Provincial Director Report for Assembly 2025

"Do not tremble, do not be afraid.

Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago?

You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me?

No, there is no other Rock; I know not one."

Isaiah 44:8

I am privileged to witness "people called by God through Jesus Christ¹" in MBCM churches. Whatever uncertainties, struggles, and trials come my way, I am continually impacted by the transformative power of our Lord, which manifests in our churches. This report is an effort to welcome you into some of these moments.

MBCM Life

January 2024 held a significant and sombre event for MBCM. At the Special Assembly on January 20, the delegates of MBCM affirmed a motion to remove River East Church from membership with MBCM. That day, I saw a people who deeply care for their neighbours, their churches and each other. The decision to remove River East Church was painful. I'm grateful for God's faithfulness to His people.

At Assembly 2024, significant time was devoted to the study of Scripture. MBCM delegates and guests joined Nasser al'Qahtani for a rich time with the Bible. I was a witness to God's people, who displayed a deep love for His Word.

May 2024 marked the conclusion of Cam Priebe's time as Provincial Director with MBCM. I was and am grateful for Cam's leadership and friendship. Cam's work increased my capacity in many ways.

In June I embarked into the role of Interim Provincial Director. Without question, this has been a year full of elevated responsibility. I'm grateful for the experience and looking forward to returning more energy into local churches, pastors and leaders in the months to come.

MBCM pastor groups meet for prayer, mutual support, and collegial conversations throughout the calendar year. One conversation from 2024 stands out in my mind: a pastor shared some deep pain regarding a family matter. I was struck by their trust in their fellow pastors and impacted by how these friends loved each other.

¹ MB Confession of Faith, Article 6, Nature of the Church

One event that most MBCM church members don't get to witness is Nuts & Bolts. This is an equipping event for MBCM pastors, which happens three times per year. The Nuts and Bolts of 2024 covered funerals, concepts of bounded church and conversations regarding MBCM's affiliation with Canadian Mennonite University. Of all the moments from Nuts & Bolts in 2024, my mind goes to one that is both painful and beautiful. At the February event, MBCM pastors debriefed the Special Assembly from the month prior. In the days following the Special Assembly, there had been some racist comments posted online about the involvement of our minority communities at the Special Assembly. At this Nuts & Bolts, two of our minority pastors shared about how those comments had impacted them personally, as well as their communities. I was an emotional wreck, and still am as I reflect and write out these words that barely tell the story! The beautiful part was that I saw these pastors step into forgiveness, I witnessed other pastors offer repentance, and saw a group of God's chosen people love each other in a space of pain.

MBCM's Pastors and Spouses Retreat (Refresh) was held in May at Hecla, Manitoba. Refresh is a time of relaxation, rest, and renewal for ministry. In 2024, a moment that stands out was a comment I overheard in a hallway: "Have you ever had so much fun at a retreat before?!?" One person commenting to their spouse. I was thankful to hear it! Pastors are often burdened in ministry and in need of some fun.

Tragedy struck the House of Covenant International Church(HCIC) on September 14, 2024. Arson caused the death of two new Canadian immigrants and the destruction of the church building. MBCM churches rallied around their sister congregation with prayer, direct support, space to meet and so much more. Thank you local church leaders for your work to care for your sisters and brothers at HCIC. A month after the fire, HCIC hosted an event of remembrance on the sidewalk beside the burned building, where many friends gathered, including members of MBCM sister church, Philadelphia Eritrean Church. Present was the family of the deceased in terrible pain, loved by their community. I was broken as a young boy shared about the loss of his church, a place he loved, and the fear that came with this experience. His faith was unshaken. Please continue to pray for this family of believers.

It was a privilege to be hosted by the Philadelphia Eritrean Church for our Council of Representatives (CR) meeting in November. MBCM delegates gathered to hear about life at MBCM and process discipleship questions. One moment of note from CR2024 was thanking Walter Fast for his years of service on the Provincial Faith and Life Team and the National Faith and Life Team.

Each year, I have the opportunity to visit our churches in northern Manitoba. From my home in Elm Creek, all but three MBCM churches are less than two hours away: Christian Centre Fellowship in Snow Lake(691km), Grace Church in Cranberry Portage(716km), and Cornerstone Community Church in Flin Flon(762km). I am honoured to witness God's people faithfully engaging in His mission in these places. Please remember to pray for our northern churches.

In the fall of 2024, FaithWorks requested release from MBCM membership on the basis that their decision to endorse same-sex marriage brings them out of alignment with our shared confession of faith. Upon a thorough process, the MBCM board granted this release effective January 1, 2025. Thank you to FaithWorks, whose choice to request release preempted MBCM's constitutional process, which would have led to a decision by the Assembly of MBCM Churches. In processing the steps of this release with FaithWorks leadership, the MBCM board and beyond, I saw that God was faithful to his people as they went through challenging experiences.

New MBCM churches

Source of Life (associate member)

Source of Life Church in Winnipeg received associate member status with MBCM in early 2024. Subsequently, MBCM board members met with me and local church leaders to develop a relationship that we expect to grow in the years ahead. I had the privilege of joining a worship service at Source of Life on October 27, 2024, along with MBCM board members and spouses. It was a joyous occasion, where the worship leader coaxed some dancing from my body, which I assure you is not much of a dancer! I witnessed a people whose joy spilled out as they worship and serve Jesus, our Source of true life.

Road 3-16 (church plant)

In 2024, Denis and Albina discerned that God was calling them to minister to Ukrainians immigrating from their war-torn homeland to Canada. While the Slavic Evangelical Church leadership and community did not want their pastoral family to leave, they rallied and blessed the Nikitins to pursue this work that God was calling them to embrace. Road 3-16 meets at Eastview Community Church with an average attendance of 50, many of whom are not yet believers in Christ. Road 3-16 is a partnership between Denis & Albina, MBCM and Multiply.

The Church of Living God (church plant)

Habtemicael Beraki has been a local church leader with MBCM for the past 16 years. Most of those years have been spent with the church now known as the Philadelphia Eritrean Church. In 2024, Habtemicael discerned that there was something new to put his effort toward. The Church of Living God meets weekly in Winnipeg, with an attendance of 70. I observed in this story that it's hard to leave a church that you love, and it is hard for a church to watch a beloved and trusted leader leave. I am witness that the leaders and community of Philadelphia Eritrean Church processed this departure with compassion and care. Thank you for your faithful witness of the work of Christ among you!

MBCM Church Statistics

MBCM is currently comprised of 39 full-member churches, one associate member church (Source of Life, submitted at Assembly 2025 for approval to full membership) and two church plants (Road 3-16, Denis and Albina Nikitin and The Church of Living God, Habtemicael Beraki).

In 2024, MBCM saw a reduction of two churches (River East Church and FaithWorks) and the addition of three churches (Source of Life, Road 3-16 and The Church of Living God).

In 2024, there are more 6,000 people attending MBCM churches every week. How many more call our churches home? And how many more are being reached by God's work among our churches? There is much to celebrate!

In 2024, MBCM churches experienced twenty-one pastoral transitions. Finding pastors is currently becoming increasingly challenging. Factors that contribute are fewer young people experiencing a pastoral calling, less vocational mobility due to the necessity for double income homes, inability to financially support a full time pastor and a wave of retiring pastors that often served in interim roles post-retirement. Please pray that God will call and send His people to this important work.

MBCM Provincial Faith and Life Team

Our PFLT diligently serves MBCM in Spiritual Health and Theology. One principal area of responsibility is credentialing MBCM pastors. Victor Neufeld leads this effort for MBCM's PFLT. Thanks to Vic and the team for your work in this area. Over the past years, the PFLT has also supported the MBCM board in the challenging work of tending to the boundaries of MBCM beliefs and practices. Thank you to the PFLT for your care and faithfulness through these complex circumstances.

Thank you to our outgoing PFLT members. Paul Walker, Walter Fast, Carl Heppner and Cherie Bright have served well, and it was a pleasure to witness their character, gifts and faithfulness.

The PFLT is pleased that Victor Neufeld has accepted our invitation to represent MBCM's PFLT on the National Faith and Life Team. Please pray for Vic as he takes on this additional role.

In 2024, the PFLT credentialed Nicole Marble (The Meeting Place), Barry Maurer (Fourth Avenue Bible Church), Adrian Enns (Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute), Steve Buhler (Living Hope Community Church), Ken Stoesz (Elmwood Mennonite Brethren Church), Joe Welty (Crossroads Mennonite Brethren Church), Kristen Unrau (Community Fellowship Church), Caleb Unrau (Community Fellowship Church) and Nathan Konrad (Fourth Avenue Bible Church).

Staff Updates

2024 was a year of significant staff transition for the MBCM office. I'm deeply grateful for each person. They have contributed to the mission of MBCM with diligence and conviction. God has been good!

A sincere thank you to Cam Priebe for his years of service as the Provincial Director. Cam's time with MBCM concluded in May of 2024.

Daria Lozova started with MBCM in March 2024. Daria has a proactive attitude and is dedicated to the administrative work of MBCM.

Michelle Madunatu started a term position* with MBCM in September 2024. Michelle has made excellent contributions to the communications work of MBCM.

Bomba Ng'andu came on in a term position beginning in June of 2024. Bomba has faithfully served MBCM in a variety of capacities over the years. In this term, Bomba has functioned in the role of Administrative Manager. Bomba has been a great help during our senior staff transition time. Bomba's term concludes at the end of Assembly 2025. Thanks to Bomba and blessings in your future!

Andrew Dyck joined the MBCM team for a few hours a week from June 2024 through February 2025. Andrew has made significant contributions to our team, and provided direct support to Jason during the Provincial Director transition.

John Neufeld started as MBCM's Provincial Director on March 3, 2025. Welcome John!

*We are happy for Holly Hannigan to welcome an addition to their family. Holly is currently on maternity leave.

Leadership Development and Education

MBCM is pleased to partner with Steinbach Bible College through the Barnabus Bursary initiative. Through this effort, we are excited to see people whom God is calling to ministry support and engage with the local church. For churches interested in exploring this option, please visit our website. We'd love to work with you!

North Kildonan MB Church has been considering opening an elementary school. Please pray for them as they pursue this endeavour.

Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute continues to experience year-over-year growth. Please pray for our Winnipeg school as they provide an education focused on learning, growth, faith in Jesus Christ, leadership and community, helping students acquire the tools and develop the character to live a Life Well Learned.

Canadian Mennonite University has been an institutional pillar with MBCM for decades. Recent circumstances have generated concern about MBCM's relationship with CMU. Please pray for the MBCM board as they navigate an evaluation process.

Resourcing churches

One of the best parts of my job is connecting a church or leader with a particular need to another church or leader who has experienced a similar circumstance. I'm grateful for the pastors and leaders around our province who are always ready and eager to support and care for their friends and ministry peers. If your church is ever facing a circumstance where you'd benefit from the experience of others, please let us know. Chances are good that some people have been through that and would love to come alongside you and help.

Some aspects of the provincial office's work are not viewable by the broader community. These include insurance navigation and negotiation, issues requiring legal counsel's involvement, and processes dealing with misconduct allegations. In every case, staff and volunteers from around MBCM contribute and participate with diligence. On behalf of all MBCM, thank you to those who serve and are not publicly acknowledged for their work.

In Conclusion

It has been and continues to be my privilege to serve the Mennonite Brethren Church of Manitoba. While some days might be packed with struggle, there are dozens of days when I get to see God working in, through, and around His people. With that said, God's presence in those days of struggle is one of the best experiences I know. I will always cherish the opportunity to experience this view. God's people are beautiful!

Submitted by Jason Dyck, no longer the Interim Provincial Director