

Executive Director Report

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It's been a great privilege to begin my journey as ONMB Executive Director over this past year. Each church in our family gives me powerful reasons to praise God. No matter where I look, I see examples of humility, perseverance, wisdom, and creativity as we all seek to joyfully join Jesus in His mission in the distinct stories unfolding within each of our churches. Praise God!

On top of all that, working with Kristi Lee and Ryan Jantzi on our ONMB staff team has been a joy. Kristi is incredibly knowledgeable, proficient, thoughtful, and creative as she serves as our Operations & Communications Manager. Ryan brings joy, wisdom, curiosity, and deep passion to his work as Ministry Director. Of course, we're more than just a set of individual members. What's most encouraging has been how the Holy Spirit has been unifying and directing us. To get a sense of the dynamic we're experiencing, check out the Jesus' Stories podcast episode, "Anticipation & Gratitude" from January 13th.

It's important for you to know how outstanding our ONMB Board, Provincial Faith & Life Team (PFLT), Missional Expressions Team (MET), and Nominating Committee are. Ryan shares in his report about the work of our PFLT and MET. I want to highlight that the ONMB Board not only provides governance oversight as a whole team but also lead and serve on teams focused on Personnel, Organizational Health, and Finance where they diligently steward the people, resources, and processes of our conference. Additionally, please join me in thanking God for the energetic way that sisters and brothers from our ONMB family are sacrificially engaged nationally participating on the CCMBC Executive Board and our National Faith & Life Team. It's a significant amount of effort offered with joy, energy, and humility.

Can I go on? I need to, because it's important to celebrate how a dynamic story of Spirit-dependent collaboration is unfolding between our ONMB Team and our Multiply partners in the province. All of us are keenly interested in uncovering every way in which we can function in unity under a single God-given purpose to continue catalyzing and supporting a dynamic and fruitful expression of God's kingdom alongside all of you.

Also, I'm inspired by the ways God is working so dynamically in the ministry of Camp Crossroads. And it was a joy to witness the launch of a new expression of partnership between MB Seminary and Ontario as WMB in Kitchener Waterloo became the school's latest Teaching Church location.





Jesus has led us by His Spirit in 2024. We've heard four invitations from the Lord that have been affirmed in both formal and informal conversations among our leaders. God is calling us to pray first, move together, join in globally, and make disciples.

A simple phrase connected to each has been helpful in providing a more clarity:

- **Pray First** – entrusting the future to God's power, not our own.
- **Move Together** – collaborating in mission regionally for Jesus' glory.
- **Join in Globally** – learning with and from the global Church.
- **Make Disciples** – teaching people to follow Jesus no matter what.



A new chapter in our shared life of prayer was sparked at our 2024 Pastors & Leaders Retreat at Camp Crossroads May 5-7. Derek Parenteau shared a plea from God for ONMB from John 21:1-14 where we read about Jesus instructing his disciples to "cast (their) net on the right side of the boat" (v.6). God gave us a picture in that story of the choice we all have – we can work in our own strength and see nothing of the harvest God has for us or we can humbly, even foolishly, trust His leadership and experience what only He can do for us.



A primary response following this time of hearing from God has been to cultivate a growing response of faith-filled prayer for a move of the Holy Spirit to bring in a God-sized kingdom harvest in our land. You can hear some of the early processing of this response on the Jesus' Stories podcast episode "A Plea for Ontario" that was published May 27, 2024.

We moved forward in prayer as leaders and members from our churches gathered on September 10th at Mountain Park Church in Niagara Falls for a day-long Prayer Summit. Since then, two 4-week Online Prayer Ministry Training cohorts have gathered to learn and pray. Alongside these responses, several of us representing each of the regions where MB churches are ministering have been discerning how we can work together as a team of prayer catalyzers for Ontario.



Ontario is a big place, and our Mennonite Brethren family is sprinkled across the southern part of the province. While we're spread out, we know that God has brought us together into a shared kingdom story. Part of growing into all that God has for us depends on practically figuring out how to serve together in unity. Thankfully, the opportunity is right in front of us since we are not randomly dispersed but form into 6 regional clusters.

Here's a list of those regions and the churches & ministries within them:

- **Essex** – Southpoint Community Church and Meadowbrook Community Church
- **Central West** – Kingsfield Zurich Mennonite Church, Maple View Mennonite Church, Evergreen Heights Christian Fellowship, Glencairn Church, and WMB Church
- **Niagara** – St. Ann's Community Church, Grantham Mennonite Brethren Church, Northend Church, Scott Street Church, Cornerstone Community Church, and Mountain Park Church
- **Georgian Bay** – Christian Fellowship Chapel, Rugged Tree, and Camp Crossroads
- **GTA** – Behta Darya Community Church, New Life Christian Church, Life Point Fellowship, Restoration Place, Jesus Network, and Kyla Sinclair-Peters' mission
- **Ottawa** – Manotick Community Church, The Gathering, Bytown Community Church, and Southeast City Church



We believe that next steps of mission through disciple making, church planting, and church reignitions will be best discerned and supported as churches and ministries in these regions come together in practical collaboration with support from our ONMB staff team. We are praying for new leaders and fresh vision to rise up in each of these six regions and for the leaders, churches, and ministry partners in those places to discover ways to collectively support the new things God invites them to do.

There are diverse opportunities and challenges in each of the regions where God has planted us. We should not expect that the next steps of collaboration in God's mission will be the same across these different contexts. Instead, the exciting opportunity is for churches to build trust, listening well to one another and to God and to stand ready in expectation that King Jesus has a plan for multiplied kingdom impact that is waiting to be uncovered.



While the Church in North America is often perceived as a source of resourcing and support for our brothers and sisters around the world, many here are both convicted and encouraged by a growing appreciation for how much we need to learn from the global Church.

We are heavy-laden with resources in Canada. Our minds, browsers, and bookshelves are crowded with strategies and models. Just about every conceivable ministry and mission concept already has numerous resources standing by to support it. Meanwhile, God's move outside the west means that most of the vitality and development of the Church is bursting out where Christians lack most of the resources to which we're accustomed.

Dynamic kingdom partnerships between our churches and churches globally is the goal. To get there, though, it's urgent for us to embrace our role as learners, listeners, and apprentices. We have so much to learn about sacrifice, suffering, Holy Spirit dependence, prayer, faith, and bold witness (to name a few) from our sisters and brothers in the global Church.

We're taking an important step forward in this as a small team of us from Ontario including ONMB board members and staff together with Derek Parenteau from Multiply will visit in Brazil in April. We're keen to learn from MB church and mission leaders there and discern how God's dynamic work in that part of our global MB family can inform and strengthen our vision for how He can work in Ontario.

No call from Jesus is more laden with potential than His commission to reach the nations by making more disciples. None of us would be here today unless generations of Christians had stepped into the adventure of teaching others to trust and obey Jesus. And yet, so many of us in all kinds of roles and positions throughout the Church feel inadequate and anxious about walking alongside even one other person so that they can come to know and trust Christ.

Along with our whole national family, we're convinced that God wants us to, "cultivate a community and culture of healthy disciple-making churches and ministries, faithfully joining Jesus in his mission." That's our mission as the MB Church in Canada. And so, as we journey, our board and staff are committed wholeheartedly to celebrating, strengthening, and supporting our disciple making capacity so that we grow in this way of living as Jesus' people.



Please let me be a bit blunt as I end: sacrificial unity is the only path into all that God can do with a family of churches like ours. That's why I'm so encouraged by every evidence of deeper unity and shared purpose among us.

An essential part of a part of the Mennonite Brethren story in Canada is embracing, whether individually and as churches, that its God who has brought us together. Our life together as a diverse collection of churches is a gift Jesus is fashioning as He's building His Church. Pursuing unity and shared sacrifice and faithfulness in God's mission is non-negotiable if we're going to grow up into all we can become by God's grace.

We need each part of our Ontario MB family engaged in this story. Let's dig deep joyfully! Let's step forward boldly, relying on the goodness, faithfulness, and power of God. Let's invest our time, our abilities, and our resources into this shared ONMB story for Jesus' glory!