

From the Board of Directors

by Richard Jones, Chair

ne of the questions I am frequently asked by MCC supporters is "what's the Board doing about finding a new President?" This is a decision that the Board is taking very seriously and it is also one that we are not going to rush into. The Board is being very intentional about looking to the future to identify the kinds of skills and capabilities we feel the next President should possess in order to lead MCC on its new strategic direction. In the interim, until we have a President in place, I am handling some of the duties of the President's role in a part-time capacity, including discussions with key partners and strategic planning. Obviously it is our preference to have a full-time President in place, and the Board is working on it. So please pray for the Board members for great wisdom and discernment as we work through the process.

At Maritime Christian College's Fall Convocation, I presented some initiatives the College is working on in 2019/2020. We believe these initiatives are integral to MCC's founding purpose to "...so educate and inspire its students as to make of them effective servants of Christ" (By-Law 4b).

One key initiative is to evolve MCC's curriculum and program offerings to focus more on disciple-making — especially the relational discipleship approach that Jesus practiced. Seven representatives from Maritime Churches recently participated in two events where "making disciples who make disciples" was the core theme.

The first event was the Renew.org conference on Nov. 6, held at Harpeth Christian Church in Franklin, Tennessee with Dr. Bobby Harrington (2014 K.T. Norris Lecturer). The focus of this one-day conference was Gospel Allegiance. I had the pleasure of attending the conference with Greg Nicholson (MCC Treasurer) and Tim Cook (MCC Special Projects) and the 550 other Christian leaders who were in attendance.

The second event was the National Disciple Makers Forum on November 7 and 8 in Brentwood, Tennessee. Approximately 2,000 participants met for two days of prayer, worship, teaching, and much discussion about using the methods of Jesus to make disciples who make disciples.

It is obvious that the hearts of many leaders in Restoration churches have been stirred by finding more effective ways to reach the world today with the Gospel – much of what we have done in the past thirty years is not working any longer. There is a growing movement among churches, both large and small, that emphasizes making disciples using the relational discipling model of Jesus as the core method of

fulfilling the Great Commission.

We will be hosting a number of meetings in various churches around the Maritimes in the first few months of 2020 to talk about our disciple-making efforts. Stay tuned for more details in coming weeks.



My Years in Pastoral Leadership

at Halifax Christian Church

(Dec 1988 - present)



s a country boy I was slightly terrified when I answered the call to become the Partners In Atlantic Canada Evangelism (PACE) evangelist in Halifax, NS. This was magnified by the fact that we were given a mandate to become self-supporting in 2 years and had weekly attendances of 15, 19, 21, 24 and our giving was about 25% of our goal.

We determined that people in the city were no different than the rural areas and the same principles should work in both places. So, our leadership went to work and developed an aggressive plan that enabled us to achieve our goal of independence from PACE. But there was still a lot of resistance to change and we coasted far too long after reaching that goal. So, our story is one of a lot of patience.

We were still a very traditional church. Some aspects of our worship service were killers to the guests present. I was also involved in too many ministries. We struggled to break 100. One thing we learned to do early on is we don't need to reinvent the wheel. If someone is doing something that's working then we determined to learn from them.

There were a lot of changes we implemented over the years and some of the key things were:

- Sensing in 2004 we could finally make some changes. That summer a group of us attended our first annual Willow Creek Global Leadership Summit, an event of value. In October we hired our first part-time youth workers.
- In 2005 we decided to adopt the 8 guiding principles of the Natural Church Development Program, something that can work for any size church and in any setting.
- In 2007 our worship service was still nowhere close to what we wanted so I brought together the leaders in the church and those involved in the worship ministry. We contacted Outreach Canada to discover the largest demographic within a 2-3 km radius of our building (25-40-year old's) and we directed our ministries toward them. We appointed our 1st Worship and Arts Director and went to a band style of worship. You would think that attendance would rise but some were offended and left.
- In 2009 we developed a leadership team of elders, ministers, and some key ministry leaders—male and female. This became a powerful force for us and that year James Stevenson joined our full-time ministry team.
- A defining moment in the history of Halifax Christian Church (HCC) was in May of 2010 when 3 of us joined the bus load from Maritime Christian College going down to the New England States to spend some time observing the church plants of Restoration House Ministries. We were inspired by what those churches were doing in a relatively similar spiritual climate as the Maritimes. On the bus ride home, I began envisioning the next steps for us. I immediately got together with our leadership team and shared the 19 changes we were going to make. The years of patience and confident leadership paid off. One of the decisions was to go with dual services which we began in September of that year. We broke the 200 barrier for the first time.
- In 2011 it became obvious that a total redesign of our building was necessary to bring us to the next level of
 growth so we brought in a church consulting group to guide us through a total renovation of our building. We
 did most of the work ourselves which exhausted us and attendance flat-lined instead of rising for a year.

We sought outside help again in 2013 and the results of that two-day process moved us to further growth. Then we changed our mindset. We now no longer try to force a change or ministry but pray about it and make sure we sense God's leading. God has been good and it is an exciting time for us at HCC. We have broken the 300 barrier on a number of occasions. We have a richness in 25 different nationalities in our church. Please pray for us as we are again at a point of deciding how to make room for the growth that we are experiencing. My biggest advice to you is *don't be a stumbling block to change in your church*.

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The Eight Principles of Natural Church Development

by James Stevenson ('09)

"This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain – first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come." Mark 4:26-29

From these verses, we can draw two conclusions about the nature of the Kingdom of God. First, we have a role to play in the growth as demonstrated by the farmer's work at seedtime and harvest. Second, God plays a role in the seemingly, "all-by-itself" growth. Almost every leader wants to know how we best play our role in the Kingdom?

After studying over 1,000 churches in 32 countries, from many denominations, theological persuasions and cultural settings, Christian Schwarz discovered discernible differences between growing and declining churches. What he found was that growing churches tended to have greater quality in eight areas of church life than declining churches; he reported his findings in Natural Church Development.

Churches have been transformed and energized as they implemented the growth principles discovered in Natural Church Development. Halifax Christian Church began implementing the principles in 2005 and they have helped bring about health and growth in our congregation.

The first principle is Empowering Leadership. This is not empowered leadership, but leadership that empowers the members of their church to do the work of ministry. Leaders avoid concentrating all the power and decision making for themselves, but instead give it away to others in differing degrees.

Just as Ephesians 4:11-12 teaches, church leaders are to invest the majority of their time in discipleship, delegation, and leader multiplication so that members can attain the spiritual potential God has for them.

The second principle, Gift-oriented Ministry, relates to the first. In healthy churches people are taught to recognize and use their God-given talents and spiritual gifts for ministry both inside the church and in the community. A leader's role is to help members identify their gifts and integrate them into ministries that correspond to their abilities.

When a Christian is serving in a ministry that matches their gifts, they are happier and more effective, and more likely to promote and support the church.

The third principle is Passionate Spirituality. This isn't simply referring to the externals of worship, but that the faith of church members is lived out with commitment, passion and enthusiasm in all areas of life.

A lot of attention in ministry is placed on the tangible things like attendance, budgets, and paint colors; these things have their proper place. However, if we ignore the spiritual aspects of congregational life, we are ensuring eventual spiritual depletion. Our churches won't function properly when our spiritual tanks are empty.

We can have great leaders, ministries, programs, etc., but in the end, effective ministry that leads to life change flows out of passionate spirituality.

Spirituality isn't something that will just happen by itself; it needs to be encouraged and cultivated in the lives of members through the practicing of spiritual disciplines.

Of the 8 characteristics, the fourth, Functional Structures, is the most controversial, threatening and perhaps the most difficult to develop. It is in this area that growing and declining churches differ the most.

Structures are never neutral. Structures are either helpful for church development, or they are detrimental. Structures either help or hinder our mission. The most important criterion for forms and structures is whether they fulfill their purpose or not.

Your current structures are perfectly designed to produce the results you are currently getting. If we want to see things change in our churches, we need to be willing to change our structures. Every church should ask, 'are we willing to eliminate those things that are not helping us accomplish the mission?' If we aren't willing to change those things that Scripture gives us the freedom to change, we shouldn't expect to see different results.

The fifth principle is Inspiring Worship. In healthy churches worship services are designed to motivate members to develop a stronger relationship with God. Healthy churches pursue excellence because they believe it honours God and inspires people. Excellence isn't perfection. Excellence is doing the best you can at the time.

Growing churches prayerfully and purposefully plan and lead high-quality, inspirational, and meaningful worship. When God is at the center of what we sing about and meditate upon, it shows people living in a troubled and chaotic world, that God is sovereign and in control.

Holistic Small Groups is the sixth principle. If the mission of the church is to make disciples – where is that taking place in our church? Corporate worship is important, but it cannot effectively

disciple people in every aspect of Christian life. Groups are a natural place where Christians can learn to serve God and others with their gifts and also practice the 'one another's' of Scripture.

The most important aspect of holistic small groups is that the groups be a safe, balanced place for the Christian to grow in the knowledge and practice of being a disciple.

The seventh principle is Need-oriented Evangelism. Leaders in healthy congregations encourage all members to share Christ with those they know.

In these churches evangelism is often done in a way that best meets an identifiable need among those who are not yet Christians in their community.

Understanding the needs of the community can serve as a rallying point to mobilize an evangelistic plan that has as its clear purpose: to bring people to become totally committed disciples of Christ.

The final principle Schwarz found in healthy churches is Loving Relationships. Genuine, practical love gives a church a much greater magnetic power to non-Christians than any marketing efforts or any evangelistic program. The love church members show for one another is often what makes people return and stick around.

While showing genuine love for one another, members must be careful not to develop a "Christian clubhouse" atmosphere. Churches must devote themselves to developing an open and smiling face to the community.

To learn more about Natural Church Development, visit ncd-canada.com. Tools & resources are available to churches that want to focus on health and growth.





ducation has undergone a shift in recent years with an introduction to new technology capable of creating a global classroom. The challenge is to embrace the change or become obsolete. For Maritime Christian College (MCC) the Biblical message has not changed, but what needs to change is how we communicate that message in today's technologically advanced environment.

MCC's core curriculum centers around the Life of Christ, Acts, Romans through Revelation, Christian Theology, Apologetics, Wordviews, Missions and Old Testament. The Bible based curriculum is foundational to MCC's moto "Thy Word is Truth" (John 17:17).

The Great Commission Matthew 28:19-20 commands us to go make disciples. MCC will be adding some new courses on what a disciple is and also what a disciple maker does. These courses will combine the Biblical and practical by using Scripture as their basis along with examples from people who are disciple making.

The big shift for MCC is communicating these Biblical truths within a virtual classroom through online learning. We

want a student who has internet access from St. George's, NL to Victoria, BC to able to take an online course at MCC while at home, without leaving their job or family. The potential for online learning is not limited to the boundries of Canada and could include the rest of the world.

Academic Dean, Tom Marshall arranges sound equipment for a recording session with one of the professors. The recording, editing, and post production of video content is just one aspect of online learning. New course development needs to consider all learning styles in order to best communicate the foundational truths above. Currently MCC is using Populi as their Learning Management System (LMS). The LMS enables the student to access course material which may include video, reading, test and discussion groups online. The LMS will be the student's access point for their online learning.

Course development takes time and MCC is starting mostly from scratch in this new field, so, the online portion will be added as it is completed to broaden the student base. MCC continues to have classes on campus. The one year Explore Program is still an option for students entering university for the first time and the College will continue to offer it's various degrees and certificates.

Exploring the Maritimes •

Students enjoyed a trip to Deer Island, NB in October. They had an opportunity to go whale watching and enjoyed the hospitality of Leanorardville Church of Christ and Lord's Cove Church of Christ during Rock Solid Ministry's Revival at Bayview Christian Camp.

Students headed to South Range, NS in November and

Colby Stewart preached on Sunday morning while the others shared who they were and thanked South Range for supporting the College. MCC alumni Darrell ('09) and Amanda Haines and Josh ('15) and Katie ('15) Stevenson met with the students for supper on Saturday and spoke about their experiences in ministry.







In Loving Memory

June 1 - November 30, 2019

In Memory of:

HATTIE ARMSTRONG – Burtt's Corner, NB

ARTHUR CHAPMAN - Charlottetown, PE

GEOFFREY CONLEY - Deer Island, NB

ALISSA HANKINSON - Trenton, ON

JIM HENDERSON - Nauwigewauk, NB

MAY & JUNE HERRING – Murray River, PE

BLANCHE W. LEWIS - South Range, NS

MARSHALL R. LEWIS - South Carolina, USA

DIANNE MATHESON - Fredericton, NB

RUTH MACKAY - Beach Point. PE

SILAS & BERTHA MACKAY - Murray Harbour, PE

CHERYL MARSHALL - South Range, NS

EARL, GORDIE & BRIAN OHL - Murray Harbour, PE

MURRAY & GRETA SPENCER - Burtt's Corner, NB

CHERYL STEWART - Fredericton, NB

LORETTA STEWART - Fredericton, NB

AVARD J. WRIGHT - Digby, NS

By:

Heather Jones

Lloyd & Lynne Ross

Darrel Stewart

Bruce & Debbie Hankinson

Peter & Norma Cook

Murray River Church of Christ Ladies

Vivian Wright

Vivian Wright

Donald & Mary Hickox

Seraphine Cadotte

Laird & Olive MacKinnon

Murray & Shirley Marshall

Shirley Calder

Hollis & Donna Grant

Darrel Stewart

Darrel Stewart

Vivian Wright

Please Note:

Memorial gift donations will be published in the Maritime Messenger and a card sent to the next of kin if the name and address are included with your donation.

In Honor of donations will be recognized with a card sent to the honoree if the name and address are included with your donation.

Alumni News



It's A Bov

Katelyn (Richardson) ('12) and Donald **MacLean** welcomed

Atlas Richard MacLean

on July 30, 2019 7 lbs 4 oz



It's A Girl

Samuel ('16) and Katrina St-Coeur welcomed

Pevton Lee St-Coeur

on July 27, 2019 7 lbs 11 oz



Published by:

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"Spending of funds is confined to board approved programs and projects. Each restricted contribution designated towards a board approved program or project will be used as designated, with the understanding that when the need for such a program or project has been met, or cannot be completed for any reason determined by the board, the remaining restricted contributions designated for a program or project will be used where needed most."

Spiritual Vitality in Biblical Thought

MARCH 10-13,/2020

Sherwood Christian Church 9 Lilac Ave, Charlottetown, PE

> Morning Sessions 9:30am - 12pm Evening Sessions 7:30 - 9pm



Dr. Les Hardin Johnson University Florida

No registration required, free will offering

For more information: www.mccpei.com or 902-628-8887



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