



emc

evangelical
mennonite
conference

Annual Report 2018



»»» Moderator's Message

Nominations for EMC Boards

Moderator

- Barry Plett, Blumenort

Board of Church Ministries (elect 2)

- Sarah Barkman, Blumenort
- Kim Muehling, Fort Garry*

Board of Leadership and Outreach (elect 3)

- Jake Enns, Leamington
- Ralph Unger, St Vital*
- Andy Woodworth, Heartland

Board of Missions (elect 3)

- Brad Brandt, Blumenort*
- Peter Rempel, La Crete
- vacancy

Board of Trustees (elect 2)

- Andrew Kampen, Blumenort
- Cheryl Rogoza, EFC Fort Frances

Nominating Committee (elect 6)

- John Bueckert, Westpointe*
- Josh Muehling, Fort Garry
- Antonio Pitta, Iglesia Emanuel*
- Anna Plett, Steinbach EMC
- Leonard Plett, Treesbank
- vacancy

*incumbent

Delegates—Please see nominee biographies on our website at www.emconference.ca/2018AnnualReport.

Organizational restructuring was top of mind for the General Board in 2017. At the June 2017 Conference Council meeting, the General Board recommended an updated organizational model, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of EMC ministries and the inter-operation of EMC boards. This is a practical implementation of the EMC Vision and Values.

A Conference Restructuring Implementation Committee (CRIC) was created to develop the revised policies. They recognized the need to engage regularly with all boards from the outset, and to involve national staff in the discussion. The committee enlisted the services of a consultant firm to assist, and “best practices” were incorporated.

A key change was creating an Executive Team, led by an Executive Director, in a revised mandate to serve all boards in planning, prioritizing and resourcing allocation. A Personnel Committee was created to oversee personnel matters, including job descriptions, salary and benefit guidelines and hiring and evaluating staff, in conjunction with the Executive Director. These changes were implemented in May 2018.

I am deeply grateful for the hard work of many people to develop and implement this updated structure, and I trust these changes will provide a healthy environment for EMC ministries to thrive into the future.

EMC's vision is to be a movement of people advancing Christ's Kingdom Culture as we Live, Reach, Gather and Teach. This report highlights just a few of the ways that we are working towards that vision together.

Abe G. Bergen, Moderator

LIVE **Caring for Ministry Workers**

RATIONALE *In 2017 nearly 20 percent of the lead pastors in EMC churches left their positions, many under difficult circumstances. About six percent of EMC Missionaries also completed terms of service in 2017. The attrition rate and personal cost to leaders, churches and partners is a concern.*

320 visits with church leaders by Conference Pastors Ralph and Layton, Church Planting Coordinator Charlie, and Youth Minister Gerald.

45 visits with missionaries by missions staff Tim, Ken and Gerald.

FOCUS **Transition Care** is a priority responsibility for Conference Pastor and other staff. It includes providing pulpit supply, creating mediation teams, providing counselling for church leaders, working with church boards on transition issues and connecting interim pastors with churches.

Member Care Centre (Manitoba) was created to assist missionaries work through issues specific to their vocation. Ken Zacharias worked with representatives from other mission/leadership development organizations in its formation.

IMPACT by T and R

During our nine year season of service as Associate Missionaries with the EMC in Central Asia, we were struck by just how well sent we were. From our home church, to the entire EMC family, we felt encouraged, prayed for, and financially supported.

A site visit from Tim Dyck and Abe Bergen in 2016 was a tremendous encouragement to us and helped us feel connected to our sending family of churches.

While we were administratively responsible to another partner mission organization to the EMC, we were impressed by the balanced approach to involvement in our ministry that the EMC had. An image that comes to mind is that of a good waiter/waitress who knows just the right balance of being available and providing service and support, without hovering too much.

When a serious health crisis in our family necessitated a shift in our ministry in 2017, we felt the love and support of the EMC as we navigated through an extremely dark time. Even as we transitioned back into life in Canada, we received follow-up from both Conference staff and the Board of Missions who gave us the space to share openly and honestly with them in person.

Thank you for walking with us through the many ups and downs over the past decade. The small but growing church that God birthed in our country of service has the fingerprints of the EMC on it.

Certified Member Care Professionals

Rolf Kruse: certified through Mission Training International to debrief missionaries on return or furlough.

Lisa Loewen and Angela Kruse: certified through Mission Training International to debrief children on return.

EVENT A June get-together for missionaries included debriefing exercises for adults and children, addressing issues of transition, grief and stress. Twenty-four adults and 15 kids participated.

REACH **Developing Cross-cultural Expertise**

RATIONALE *While there is no substitute for experience, training enhances skills and confidence to navigate cultural differences. This is important whether we minister abroad or in our own neighbourhoods.*

FOCUS A C2C partnership means personnel are available to train and support EMC Canadian Church Planters.

EMC missions and church planting has developed expertise in church planting with Hispanic and Low German people groups and is able to resource others.

Ascend Internship Program was developed to disciple young adults in a cross-cultural setting. A total of seven interns have been sent so far, though there were none in 2017—we'd love to see more.

EVENT A cultural intelligence workshop was held in September 2017 as part of an EMC commitment to become more aware and adept in cross-cultural skills. Twenty-eight people attended.

Match the greeting to the language it's in

Mba'eishapa	Low German
Bonjour	Spanish
Hola	Guarani
Nǐ hǎo	Cree
Tansi	Mandarin
Goondach	French



In **14** EMC churches more than half of the congregation grew up speaking a language other than English (estimate).

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Loving the World (Well) by Calvin Tiessen

What does Jesus' command to "love your neighbour as yourself" (Matthew 22:39) mean when my neighbour is very "unlike" me? Loving others who are different from ourselves is a journey of discipleship and there is good news. In his book *Expand Your Borders*, David Livermore defines a set of skills called *Cultural Intelligence*: "the capability to be affective across different cultural contexts—including national, ethnic, generational, organizational, and other contexts." Cultural Intelligence skills have been well defined and they can be developed by anyone.

Developing our Cultural Intelligence involves growing in our **Motivation** for working with others, our **Knowledge** about how others are different, our **Strategies** for effectively relating to others and finally in the steps of **Action** we take in these relationships.

As a first step towards loving others well it is often helpful to receive training or coaching in the skills of Cultural Intelligence. One example of this kind of training is that offered by the Cultural Intelligence Center at www.culturalq.com. EMC also has certified facilitators to help develop Cultural Intelligence skills.

Cross-cultural Skills Training

Calvin Tiessen: certified facilitator in Cultural Intelligence skills. He is available to train individuals and groups. For information please contact him at calvin.tiessen@wycliffe.ca.

REACH Expansion Process and Thoughts

As the Board of Missions considers expansion in 2018, how do we proceed? **Review our purpose** “to glorify God and to establish local autonomous churches” **Research:** In which country and location can we best carry out the primary purpose? Where is the evangelical church at two percent or less? **Pray! Identify** two to five potential areas of greatest spiritual need, **choose** a

Field	year EMC opened field	number of missionaries	churches at transition	year missionaries left field	current number of churches
Guadalajara	2010	8			1
Bolivia	2011	5			2
Paraguay	1959	90			14
N. Mexico – Spanish	1957	102		2012	13
N. Mexico – German				2015	9
Germany	1975	8		1993	
Nicaragua	1966	18	8	1991	22
Africa	1953	14			

prospective field, **meet** with agency leaders in Canada and onsite with churches and agencies serving in the area. Finally the Board of Missions will **make a decision!** Please pray for wisdom and discernment for the BOM.

Reflecting on the most recent expansion! About ten years ago, the existing EMC mission fields in Mexico were ready to move to independence and the Board of Missions began exploring the potential for opening a new field. They focused on Latin fields, as that was their area of expertise and default. They studied Mexico for area of greatest need, and met in Mexico with workers they had confidence in. On receiving affirmation and approval, EMC expanded to Guadalajara (GDL) in 2011.

John and Connie Reimer, the first missionaries sent through EMC to GDL, have this to say:

In June 2010 preaching my last message in Swan River, the passage was Joshua 1:9, where God commands the people of Israel not to be fearful, but strong and courageous, for God was going to be present. This verse spoke volumes to us as we considered moving to Guadalajara, a city of six million. What a contrast in size, from knowing virtually everyone to knowing no one. Culture, currency and values were so different.

God had called us. Our faith journey was being enlarged by targeting the upper middle class: people with resources, careers and traditions.

When we arrived we found the people friendly, helpful and intrigued. We found that the gospel is best communicated in love, respect and appreciation. Coming as students, willing to learn and to be taught Mexican history, vocabulary, culinary tastes and recipes was significant. As a result, people were inclined to be more open and a reciprocal phenomenon took place. The gospel is a refreshing, fear-addressing message only God can give. The upshot is peace with God, self and neighbours.

I truly believe that opening a new field is beneficial for missionaries, recipients of the gospel and supporting constituency. May EMC continue to look to fields white for harvest.

The GDL field is experiencing more transitions with John and Connie retiring, Ernie and Diane Kooop returning and Angel and Blanca Infantes arriving in July.

GATHER to Pray

RATIONALE *Calling out to God advances His Kingdom in powerful ways. It moves people to engage in ministry alongside others.*



1,640 Individual requests are prayed for by EMCers each year.

250 people receive the prayer corps letter each month.

FOCUS Praying, and gathering to pray are not new but we are finding more ways to bring people together through communications technology and enhanced ability to travel.

Prayer Coordinator

Beth Koehler: Beth serves as the EMC Board of Mission's prayer coordinator. She is available to churches to help facilitate a prayer ministry or event focused on missions. Contact her at beth.y.koehler@gmail.com.

IMPACT

Impact of Prayer Team by Chris Kroeker

In the past four plus years, we have had three prayer teams visit us in Paraguay. Each team, in a unique way, is an encouragement to the missionaries and local believers with their prayers, testimonies and example. They help increase the awareness in EMC of the needs and challenges of the ministry being done in Paraguay. Those who come on a team can support, encourage and pray for us missionaries with a greater interest and understanding. Their presence and willingness to pray for and interact with people they meet opens doors that may remain closed or undiscovered by the missionaries. We find that, as we take the team out to meet the people we have contact with, there are usually a few decisions for Christ that result. As they look into and pray for other ministries and their personnel, these servants have expressed the encouragement this brings them. One said: "We have not received a visit by anyone who simply offers to pray for us, since the team came here a year ago and prayed for us. Thank you so much!"



EVENTS EMC sent prayer teams to Paraguay in March of 2017 and 2018. We plan to send our first prayer team to Bolivia in October 2018 and hope to see another one or two teams go to Guadalajara and Paraguay in early 2019.

Two half-day prayer conferences were held in early 2018 using technology to bring people together from Canada and Mexico/Paraguay.

TEACH **Christ's Grace in History**

RATIONALE Teaching church history displays Christ's grace in the past to believers who, like us, have convictions, make sacrifices, and reveal imperfections. We are comforted by His grace, reminded of key beliefs, and motivated to follow together as we move ahead to His future.

FOCUS A number of EMC publications focused on the Protestant (Radical) Reformation in 2017 in honour of its 500 year anniversary.



Anabaptist Study Track—Providence Theological Seminary

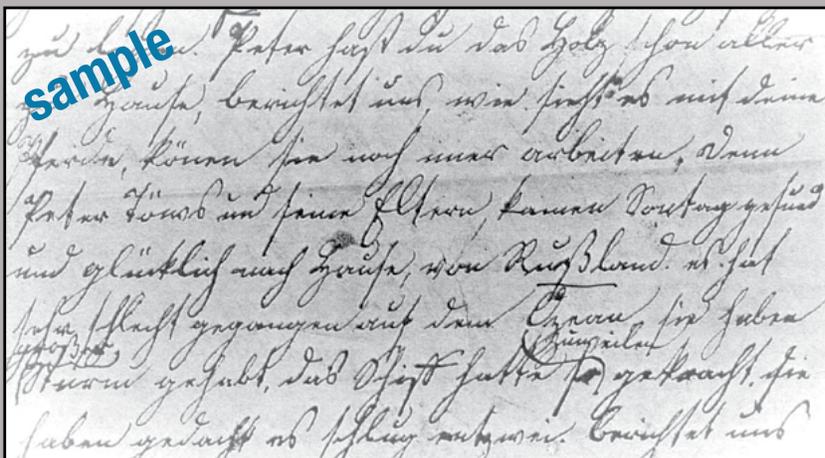
Layton Friesen (PhD.), EMC Conference Pastor, *Radical Reformation: History, Thought and Practice* May 14–18, 2018.

Zac Klassen (PhD., cand.), Former EMC Pastor, *A Complicated Faithfulness: Issues in Contemporary Anabaptist Theology* May 21–25, 2018.

3rd revision of the EMC history book by Doris Penner is currently underway.

EVENT The Anabaptist Study Track was launched with an open house on February 22, 2018 at Providence Theological Seminary.

24 articles on the Protestant (Radical) Reformation were published in EMC publications (*The Messenger* and *Theodidaktos*) in 2017.



Peter, have you brought all the wood home? Can your horses still work? Peter Toews and his parents came home Sunday from Russia. They had a bad voyage on the ocean as there was a big storm and the ship had creaked and groaned and they had thought that it would break in two. (to Peter B. Kroeker from his parents, 1903, translated by Harvey K. Plett)

1,650 German documents in the EMC archives.

400 of these are letters, diaries or personal journals. They date back to 1813—a journal by Isaac W. Loewen.

230 of these are sermons. They date back to 1815—a “predigt” (sermon) by Klaas Reimer.

EMC: a movement of people advancing Christ's Kingdom Culture

Youth and Kids Ministries

Often themes emerge from church reports. In 2017 it was youth and kids' ministries, illustrating one way in which EMC churches are advancing Christ's Kingdom Culture.

We continue to be blessed by a vital children's ministry, with biweekly Children's Club events and a Sunday School program that includes up to 68 children.—Fort Garry

Currently, about 40 junior and 15 senior youth attend. Most are from the community and many do not attend any church.—Island Gospel

Sunday School has reached a record high, Awana is bursting at the seams.—High Level

We imagined young people graduating from SEMC's Sunday School ministry knowing what they believe; why they believe it; and being able to share their beliefs with others.—Steinbach EMC

The Kids Club is an important aspect of our ministry. The children come after school on Tuesdays—so many pass right by the building on their way home.—Northern Fellowship Chapel

Our VBS program has become a strong outreach for our church as over half the children attending are from within our community.—Taber

Our sanctuary still has room, even at our highest attendance, but our Sunday School wing is cramped at our peak.—La Crete

3,080 People attended an EMC Sunday School in 2017. Most are children! This does not include the many children participating in weekday or summer programming.

Women in Bolivia by Caroline Krahn

167 Women from Bolivian colonies attended a retreat called "A Worthwhile Rose" with speaker Carla Wiens, a nurse from Paraguay. The purpose was to see women set free from



their past and to educate them about what is normal so

they're not living in fear (she also spoke of the importance of educating your husband). It was also so they could educate their daughters and sons so the cycle of sexual abuse/sins can stop. In addition, Carla spoke about the privacy of your body and about rape.

In all of her talks Carla was very graphic and did not mince words. It was amazing how accepted it was. I don't think the majority of the women knew what the sessions were going to be about. Like me, they thought it would be another biblical teaching on how God has made us who we are and how we should dress and how our husbands should treat us and vice versa. No such thing!



Financial Report 2017

Where does EMC get money to carry out the ministries we do together? Most of it comes from you, as you give to the EMC through your church budget (67%). Many individuals contribute directly to EMC as well (24%). Then there are people who leave a donation as part of their estate (8%). In 2017 we ended the year with a small surplus of about \$14,000.

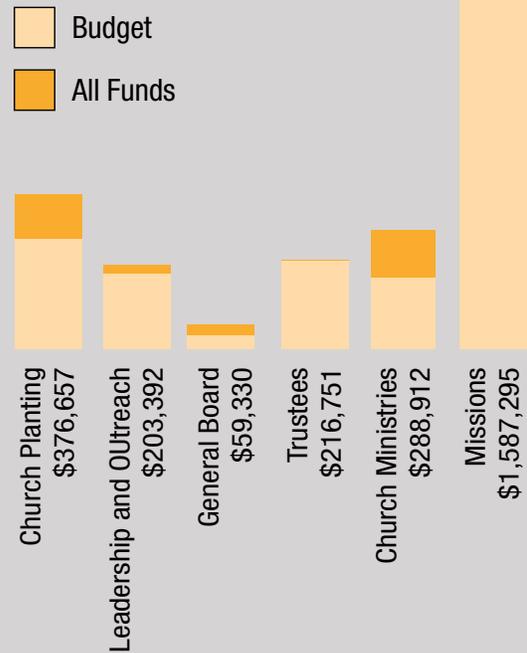
You might also be interested in knowing how the money is spent. The bar chart on the right shows EMC expenses with the budgeted amount in peach. Boards raise additional funds through special projects and approved ministries throughout the year. These additional funds are shown in orange. As you can see, the total funds received and spent is much larger than just the budgeted amount.

Thank you for helping to support the work of your church as well as the work we do together. Your contribution makes a huge difference!

The EMC financial statements have been audited by On Business Solutions. A copy of the report is available from the EMC office.

2017 Budget and All Funds Disbursements

\$2,732,337



2017 Budget Receipts

Total Budget: \$1,715,836.41

