


# WEEK OF PRAYER

Pray with Mennonite Brethren across Canada



Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus (Acts 4:29 – 30).

As Canadian Mennonite Brethren, our desire is to see Canada transformed by the good news of Jesus Christ one life at a time. At the beginning of the new year, I invite us all to recommit ourselves to Jesus, His mission in the world and His calling on us as a church.

We believe prayer is instrumental in the life of the church – for clarity, power and unity. Our staff prepared this seven-day guide as a resource for churches and individuals to embark on a journey across Canada through prayer.

God's Spirit is at work in our country. The Lord invites us, His servants, to join His work – to speak and act with boldness, healing and power for the sake of Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

This year's prayer guide highlights the seven regions where MBs are active, providing a snapshot of the

needs and opportunities in each province. As you read the brief history of each region, you'll see how an impetus toward mission – a desire for all people to be reconciled with God through Jesus – was present at the very beginning of our church family.

My prayer is that our passion for mission would continue to grow through church multiplication initiatives such as community service and outreach, the initiation of new churches and the creative ministry of established churches. Let's pray for God to move in us and through us, anticipating the amazing things Jesus will do across Canada in 2014!



Willy Reimer, Executive Director



**CANADIAN CONFERENCE**  
of Mennonite Brethren Churches





# Day One: British Columbia

British Columbia has the largest population of religiously unaffiliated people in the country, with 44 percent of the province not claiming any type of religious label.

Opportunities abound for B.C.'s MB churches. Thousands of children hear the good news of Jesus at five camps annually. Columbia Bible College and MB Biblical Seminary train leaders for ministry. And C2C Network is planting churches in various urban centres.

## History of MB churches in B.C.

- 1928: MB families from the Prairie provinces come to the Fraser Valley.
- 1931: Three congregations are organized.
- 1940: The B.C. MB Conference is officially incorporated.
- 1970s: The region sees growth in church planting among a variety of ethnic groups.

## Early ministries:

- A home for young female domestics in Vancouver.
- A mission to children is started by the Western Children's Mission.



**Rob Thiessen**, Conference Minister  
B.C. MB Conference

## Reflection (Acts 4:29–30)

- *Reflect on God's blessings this past year. Praise Him for how He is working in your life. Confess the times you fell short or sinned.*
- *Be silent and listen to the Lord's voice. What is He saying to you? What is His call on your life this year?*

## Pray with the 113 MB churches in B.C.

- *Praise God for freedom to worship Him and to plant new churches.*
- *Ask the Lord to pour out grace and power in northern cities where economic growth is booming.*
- *Pray for the Spirit's leading as churches reach out to their communities.*





# Day Two: Alberta

Alberta's population growth is the fastest in Canada, making it a vibrant and entrepreneur-friendly place to live. Despite the region's resource and monetary wealth, thousands live in spiritual poverty.

Responding to the massive flood that hit Alberta in June 2013, local churches formed closer partnerships, as people graciously opened their hearts, homes and wallets. The Alberta conference also values partnership, blending many of its services and budget with the Canadian conference.

## History of MB churches in Alberta

- 1920s: The Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization directs MB families to Canadian Pacific Railway land. The first congregations are formed in Coaldale, Gem, Vauxhall and Rosemary.
- 1928: The Alberta MB Conference is established.
- 1950s: City groups become independent congregations.

## Early ministries:

- Focus was placed on work in educational institutes.
- In the 1970s and 1980s, work among Aboriginal Peoples was emphasized.



Val Martens, Moderator  
Alberta MB Conference

## Reflection (Acts 4:29–30)

- *What are some challenges your church faces in sharing the good news of Jesus? How might the Lord help you overcome those obstacles? Reflect on the way Jesus faced threats and resistance in His life.*
- *Praise the Lord for His ever-present Holy Spirit, who provides strength, guidance and assurance.*

## Pray with the 22 MB churches in Alberta.

- *The Alberta conference convention will take place March 2014. Pray that those in attendance will come together and make wise decisions.*
- *Pray for the executive board as they lead the Alberta conference, which is currently without an executive director.*
- *Pray that pastoral openings will be filled.*



# Day Three: Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan's farming reputation has been transformed into a resource extraction leader in the oil, gas and mining sectors.

The boom brings unprecedented population growth to the province. Saskatchewan is now a destination for skilled workers from China, India, Pakistan and the Philippines. Saskatchewan's churches are reaching out to their new neighbours with initiatives like Forest Grove's multi-campus expansion plans and Lanigan's growing circle of missional communities.

## History of MB churches in Saskatchewan

- 1898: MB families arrive from the U.S. and Manitoba.
- 1899: North Saskatchewan District (Rosthern area) is established.
- 1909: South Saskatchewan District (Herbert area) is established.
- 1966: North and South Saskatchewan Districts amalgamate.

## Early ministries:

- An emphasis on missions resulted in initiatives such as vacation Bible school, camp ministries, city mission and missionary training schools.



**Ralph Gliege**, Director of Church Ministries  
Saskatchewan MB Conference

## Reflection (Acts 4:29–30)

- *Reflect on the gifts and talents God has given you. Thank Him that you're "fearfully and wonderfully made."*
- *Recall a time you were bold in sharing the message of salvation. How would your life change if you practiced fearless confidence in speaking about what you've experienced? Reflect on God's heart for advancing His mission in the world.*

## Pray with the 33 MB churches in Saskatchewan.

- *Pray for Ralph Gliege as he retires from the position of director of church ministries and for Dwayne Barkman, director of Harvest Saskatchewan, as he moves toward retirement. Pray that transitions to new directors will be smooth.*
- *Pray that God will call the right person to serve as regional director for the C2C Network.*
- *Praise God for the strong missional mindset in Saskatchewan churches.*





# Day Four: Manitoba

Winnipeg hosted Canada's first Truth and Reconciliation Commission gathering in 2010, where people heard stories of Canada's residential school system.

Many Manitoba churches, leaders and ministries have a heart for Aboriginal Peoples, in Winnipeg's inner city and neighbouring reserves.

Manitoba's churches are also involved in their communities through grassroots ministries such as a community garden at Crossroads MB Church and literacy evening at One88.

## History of MB churches in Manitoba

- 1888: The first MB congregation in Canada organizes at Burwalde (near Winkler), resulting from the visit of an MB evangelist from the U.S. in 1886.
- 1923–1930: Migration of Mennonites from Russia results in the founding of many more congregations.
- 1929: The Mennonite Brethren Church of Manitoba is formally organized.

## Early ministries:

- By 1913, rural churches supported full-time missionaries in Winnipeg.
- Radio broadcasting began in 1947 when four Bible college students started the Gospel Light Hour.
- New churches started in northern Manitoba in the 1970s.



Elton DaSilva, Executive Director  
Mennonite Brethren Church of Manitoba

## Reflection (Acts 4:29–30)

- *Is there anything about the history of churches across Canada that surprises you? What stands out to you about each region?*
- *Reflect on ways you or your church can be agents of unity in the MB denomination. Pray for increased fellowship and partnership.*

## Pray with the 41 MB churches in Manitoba.

- *Pray that God will grant passion, wisdom and opportunity to effectively minister with and among Manitoba's Aboriginal Peoples, Franco-Manitoban and new immigrant communities.*
- *Pray for an outpouring of God's Spirit in established churches so they are renewed and equipped for their mission.*
- *Praise God for the increasing heart and partnership for mission in Manitoba churches.*





# Day Five: Ontario

Half of all new Canadian immigrants settle in Ontario, creating a truly multicultural population. With this comes a diverse religious landscape - some 11 percent of all Canadians belong to religions other than Christianity.

Many of our Ontario MB churches work with Canada's immigrant population. Some of them "Move In" to the neighbourhood, experiencing a vast array of cultural traditions, foods and languages.

## History of MB churches in Ontario

- 1924: Mennonites from Russia settle in southern Ontario, mainly Waterloo County area. Language and cultural differences and their growing numbers lead the Russian Mennonites to worship separately from their Swiss Mennonite hosts.
- 1932: The Ontario MB Conference is founded in New Hamburg.

## Early ministries:

- Children's Bible schools expanded to many parts of southern Ontario by 1944.
- Camping ministries resulted in the purchase of a new camp property in 1980.



Ed Willms, Executive Director  
Ontario Conference of MB Churches

## Reflection (Acts 4:29–30)

- *Reflect on those in your life who need healing. Do they need physical, spiritual or emotional healing? What aspects of Canadian culture need Jesus' healing touch today?*
- *Praise the Lord that His hand is always stretched out toward us. What does that mean for you?*

## Pray with the 32 MB churches in Ontario.

- *Pray that new church plants will emerge across Ontario through the prayerful focus of the G2C Network team and director Greg Laing.*
- *Praise God for his work in and through churches to reach their neighbours with the good news of Jesus Christ.*
- *Pray for Ontario's executive director Ed Willms as he connects with pastors and leaders.*



# Day Six: Quebec

Attendance at religious services in Quebec has decreased dramatically over the past decades. “Like a brush soaked with a powerful paint remover, secularism has liquefied and scrubbed away religion from people’s lives,” wrote Éric Wingender, late professor of theology at ETEM.

Resources and energy in the Quebec conference are stretched but spirits are strong. Community outreach occurs through church planting, camping ministry, a bimonthly magazine and Bible college training.

## History of MB churches in Quebec

- 1960s: After mission work in Congo is interrupted by conflict, French-speaking families settle in Quebec to begin church planting.
- 1964: The first congregation is organized in Saint-Jerome.
- 1983: The Quebec MB Conference (AEFMQ) is founded.

## Early ministries:

- Evangelistic work in the 1960s, primarily in the greater Montreal area, focused on literature distribution and Bible study groups.
- A Bible institute at Saint-Rose was formed in 1976 to train leaders for Quebec churches.



Gilles Dextraze, Executive Director  
Quebec MB Conference (AEFMQ)

## Reflection (Acts 4:29–30)

- *What signs and wonders have you seen performed in Jesus’ name? How has the Lord transformed your life? The life of your church? The life of the MB denomination?*
- *How is God calling you to expectant dependence on Him this year?*

## Pray with the 15 MB churches in Quebec.

- *Ask God to provide a pastor for the Khmer Cambodian church in Saint-Laurent.*
- *Pray for the committee tasked with raising funds for church projects and activities.*
- *Pray that the Lord will call youth pastors for the churches. Pray that participants in the Provincial Youth Committee will be equipped for the task of winning youth to Christ.*





# Day Seven: Atlantic Canada

With several universities in the region, MB churches have many opportunities to reach out to young people with Jesus' love.

Research shows that 60 percent of churchgoing teens become spiritually disengaged after high school. Our five churches in Atlantic Canada are finding creative ways to engage with these young people. They're also serving young families, people who are homeless and many others.

Churches in Atlantic Canada receive care and support from the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.

## History of MB churches in Atlantic Canada

- 1954: Mennonites work as teachers, entrepreneurs, blueberry farmers and in other professions.
- 1960s: A Christian Service Unit is formed in Nova Scotia. CS workers serve in their professional areas and help with church plants.
- 1967: Mount Edward Bible Fellowship is formed.
- 1980s: Dedicated workers are sent to plant churches.

## Reflection (Acts 4:29–30)

- *Praise the Lord for His holiness, goodness and mighty power.*
- *Praise God that He works in and through you. Consider how He's calling you to be part of His plan to transform Canada and draw all people to Himself.*

## Pray with the five MB churches in Atlantic Canada.

- *Pray that Christians would embrace their commission to make and mature disciples in Atlantic Canada.*
- *Pray that church and denominational leaders will experience deeper unity in Christ for the sake of the gospel.*
- *Pray that followers of Jesus will know the depth of God's love, which overflows in the way we join Jesus in loving our neighbours as ourselves.*

