

A NEW APPROACH TO CONGREGATIONAL RESOURCING

MCEC has spent time over the past several years listening to what congregations are experiencing and the challenges that they face in adapting to a rapidly changing social context and an increasing secular society. In its listening to congregations, MCEC has heard a call for fresh resources to help congregations sharpen their sense of mission, adapt to changing circumstances, and become more confident in engaging with their neighbours and local communities.

In order for our congregations to adapt and thrive in a changing world, MCEC is committed to continue walking alongside congregations in the role of resource broker and catalyst. MCEC began this shift with the 2005 restructuring and more recently in significant initiatives like ReLearning Community. As we continue on this journey, MCEC believes that the congregation will benefit from helping their members to use the gifts and resources that God has given them in order to engage their neighbour and community with the transforming love of God. A more intentional extending of the peace of Jesus Christ has the potential to turn us from being onlookers into being a sent people. To move in this direction will require a new set of skills and resources for ministry.

Historically, MCEC has connected congregations to a wide range of resources for their ministry – likely more than many are aware. MCEC, however, is in the process of expanding that range of resources. The wide diversity among congregations calls for an approach from MCEC that looks for new ways to grow and strengthen congregations that are suited to their unique calling, their needs for resources, and their ways of being a body of Christ. The role of MCEC is to creatively support the changing needs of our congregations in these rapidly changing times.

MCEC is experimenting with a new approach that will support congregations in assessing their current situation and help them connect to the resources that they need by:

- Networking congregations with ministry partners for the creation and provision of resources, training, and partnering for congregational ministry initiatives.
- Communicating the many opportunities available for how congregations might connect with those opportunities.
- Directly walking alongside congregations who are interested in pursuing a journey of congregational development and renewal through a relationship with a Regional Minister or other service provider. This renewal journey would include listening to congregations as they discern how God is calling them to respond to their ministry context and encouraging them as they connect to resources that will help them walk an exciting new path of renewal and discovery.

MCEC is developing new resources to support the new approach to congregational resourcing:

- MCEC is in the process of commissioning a new congregational reflection tool specifically designed for Mennonite congregations that will help congregations to discern and embrace next steps on their journey of congregational vitality. This reflection tool is currently in the process of design and development.
- Customized workshops conducted onsite in congregations that address specific needs that are identified as they arise out of the congregation's listening, reflection, and ministry experience.

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- Where helpful and desired, congregations may invite a coaching relationship with MCEC staff or another ministry partner who will walk with them on this journey of discovery and congregational renewal.

This new approach to serving MCEC congregations will reflect the vision, priorities, and strategies of our MCEC mission statement, while at the same time responding to the individual discernment of congregations. MCEC values your feedback, wisdom, and discernment so that together we can listen to the voice of the Spirit and take steps that will keep our congregations strong, healthy, and relevant. In particular, please be alert for new resources as they become available. If approached, please also consider an invitation to become a part of a pilot project. We need your congregation's experience and wisdom as we test some of these new ways of resourcing congregational ministry and mission so that in the future we can all benefit.

Please remember to pray for these new initiatives. As we partner together to join with where God is at work in the world, we want to be both faithful and bold in our call to extend the peace of Jesus Christ.

David Martin
Executive Minister