

BCBA Executive Minister Report - Bob Krahn

Executive Minister's Report

AGM – April 5, 2022

“I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength.”

Philippians 4:13

“And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:19

Our Mission: To please God by growing healthy churches through making disciples of Christ.

Our Vision: To provide every person in our God-given and growing sphere of friendships with an opportunity to learn about Jesus Christ and to become His follower.

Executive Minister and the BCBA Executive Council

The BCBA Executive Minister and the BCBA Executive Council govern on behalf of the churches of the BCBA. It is our goal to connect churches and supply the resources necessary to build healthy, disciple-making BCBA churches. To that end we:

1. Assess the resources that we have as an Association
2. Fervently seek the Lord and ask for His wisdom
3. Set goals, create policies and make decisions

One of our core values is to strive for excellence in all that we do by setting goals that will then be measured for effectiveness. God has given the BCBA all the resources that it needs to accomplish His will through the churches in BC. The Executive Minister and each member on the Council has a calling from God to work together in unity to bring clarity of vision and purpose to the BCBA.

The statement above is like one that was written in 2005 and put in the docket under my report. Between 2005 and 2021 much has happened in the BCBA, but the excellent leadership and unity of the Council has remained strong. I will greatly miss Tim Doling on our team as he finishes his term at this AGM. He has been a valuable friend and a great asset to our discussions and decisions over these many long years. I am also very pleased to introduce you to Dan Hoffman who will be voted on today to be part of our team. You can read a short introduction about him in the docket. He has led his church with grace and ingenuity, and we are looking forward to his input into our discussions.

The verses above have guided me over this last year, (Philippians 4:13,19). They have helped me to not be distracted by what is happening around me but to stay focused on Christ, His grace, and His power. We began 2020 with eager anticipation of another year of successful outreach into our communities. We were celebrating so many creative outreach projects in our churches. Churches were unified and growing! And then we were hit by the pandemic, which we thought would be over in a few months. The pandemic continued from 2020 into 2021. Perhaps worse than the new restrictions put on our churches, was the continuing instability that the restrictions brought because they kept changing. Each change that came was met with faith and endurance by the churches, but it was also extremely wearing on pastors and leaders.

As I look back over the last year, I praise God for so many blessings, but I also see the toll the pandemic has taken on many of our churches. In speaking with other denominational leaders, I discovered that we are not alone. Some of our churches have grown and have been financially healthy, but several have seen their numbers shrink by about 30% with a similar loss in financial giving. Church statisticians are saying that pastors are tired and I want to encourage all of our churches to consider how they can resource their pastors to take the needed time for renewal and revitalization.

The demographics in our communities are changing and they are also changing in the church. Barna, a known and respected research company, did a recent survey for pastors who have gone through the last two years of very stressful ministry. They said that 38% of pastors indicated that they are planning to leave the pastoral ministry. They stated that of all the occupations, the call to be a pastor in a local church is the most dangerous in terms of longevity, burnout, depression, and many other issues like loneliness. Another study from the Barna group revealed that in 1992, the average age of a pastor was 44 years. In 2017, 25 years later, the average was 55+ and only 1 out of every 5 pastors was under the age of 40. In 2022 the average age is now closer to 60+ and many of the older pastors are planning to retire. A decade ago, it was predicted that there would be a major pastoral shortage. It is happening now.

You may have picked up that I am somewhat apprehensive about what the future may hold. I think that 2019 was a year of great celebration and joy for the BCBA. 2020 was a year of change and adjustment. 2021 was a year of seeking encouragement and hope while dealing with the ongoing stressful discussions about masks, vaccination passports and closures. I believe that 2022 is going to be a year of rebuilding relationships with members, with the community, and with God.

Let me read those verses in Philippians again:

“I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength.”

Philippians 4:13

“And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:19

God has been blessing the BCBA with our finances. At the end of 2021, we phased out our legacy fund grants and we are now in the process of writing new guidelines for using these funds. Again, you will see in our financial report, that we have given over \$800,000 to churches for outreach and other projects since 2019.

Our Executive has been working on three key areas as we move into the future. Three proposals were discussed and were approved at our last executive meeting. These proposals were also given to about 34 pastors at the pastors' conference to get their input. The Executive will be meeting in May to draw up a specific policy about these key areas and how we will implement them over the next coming years.

1. The first proposal is to combine **Church Planting with Church Revitalization**. Over the last decade we have planted 7 churches: Grace Gospel Church in Cawston; WestMount in West Kelowna; Gather Church Steveston in Richmond; The Lighthouse connected to Ft. George in Prince George (closed as a direct casualty of the Pandemic regulations); Redeemer Chinese Baptist Church (very loosely affiliated with us now); Acts 29 in Vancouver and Vancouver Zion Church in Vancouver. Acts 29 has also recently planted a very exciting Portuguese church in their building. We are currently looking at other locations for possible church plants.

While church planting remains of ultimate importance in the BCBA, it is also very important to help churches that are stagnant or declining, to go through renewal and revitalization. We have a church planting budget, and we are now including church revitalization with those funds. I am looking forward to presenting the new policy on these funds after our next meeting.

2. The second proposal has to do with **Revisions to the Legacy Fund Grants**. We will meet twice a year as a committee to review applications for grants. While priority will be given to churches who have community outreach projects, other church-related applications for things such as building projects, children/youth/adult training programs, conferences, leadership retreats, technical upgrades, etc. will also be considered. The interest and investment rates have dropped this last year, but we are planning to have approximately

\$80,000 available for these grants. It will draw down on our capital, but we feel being there to help churches is a priority.

3. The third proposal has to do with **Educational Grants**. At this point we do not have a budget to help students who are looking to pursue theological education. We have helped students who are studying for youth ministry on a case-by-case basis, but we are looking into how we can be more supportive of churches as they recognize those in their congregations who have a calling into full-time ministry. We will be working on a policy in this area.

2021 has again been a year when many of the regular programs in our churches have been cancelled. In the Vancouver area our BCBA combined Good Friday service was cancelled for the second year in a row. The NAB Triennial was held virtually for the first time in its history, and our AGM in 2021 was also done virtually.

This year we are doing something new for our AGM. The meeting this evening is being held at the end of our pastors' conference which allows us to have most of the pastors from our churches in attendance, along with church delegates joining as a group from their buildings or individual representatives participating from their homes. We praise God for enabling this refreshing opportunity and especially that so many restrictions have been lifted to make this possible.

On a personal note, I accepted the nomination to be a member of the Church Investors' Fund, Board of Directors this year. We meet virtually each month and once a year in person. Most members of the CIF Board have valuable financial insights and experience; however, my role is to be a spiritual advisor as they discuss millions of dollars of loans to churches.

I was also asked to be on a committee to work with Cam Taylor and the Transitional Leadership Network. I was part of a one-year pilot project working with other denominational leaders to help this organization put together a policy and set the direction for work with transitional pastors and churches. I have seen the important need for having a well-trained transitional pastor to help a church before they call a new pastor. This committee has allowed me to help direct that process.

While my travel was very limited throughout the province due to Covid restrictions, I did get to Prince George and had the privilege of preaching at all the churches - via video to College Heights and Fort George, and in person at the Lighthouse and Hartland.

The highlight for many of our pastoral families was the week we spent at Green Bay Bible Camp. We were spoiled by their love and care for us. Jenn Koop is a gracious host, and the staff went out of their way to make us feel special! They worked hard to inspire all the kids and Jenn's husband, Sid, knew just what we needed to hear as he led adult devotions each day.

As we finish the first quarter of 2022, and see the devastating war in Ukraine, it is hard to comprehend what the world might look like a year from now. Many NAB's understand very well the horrors of what their parents and grandparents endured during times of war. I praise God for Canada and the safety we have here and ask that you fervently pray for His peace and protection to reign in the world.

I am relieved to say goodbye to 2021 and wait eagerly to see all the ways that God will surprise us with His joy and mercy in 2022. I want to express my deep appreciation to our faithful 2021 executive committee of Matt Dressler, Melinda Bahr, Andre Deepwell, Tim Doling, Harry Bicknell and to my gifted office manager Amy Friesen. Please pray for Dan Hoffman as he joins us. And please pray for me as we seek to serve the Lord and the BCBA together.

Always remember ...

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glorious riches in Christ Jesus."**

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