

2021

# MINISTRY IMPACT REPORT



Have you experienced the increasing unpopularity of living for Jesus and speaking for biblical truth? You're not alone.

The book of Daniel, perhaps more relevant now than in recent memory, describes how the political and social leaders of the day viewed Daniel: "They could find no corruption in him because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. Finally, these men said, "We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God." (Daniel 6:4-5).

In other words, it was Daniel's lifestyle of living loyally to God and his Word that caused him to be in conflict with the social and political climate of the day. That sounds a lot like today.

One of our goals at MB Seminary is to train godly and courageous leaders like Daniel, whether in church or the marketplace, who know how to handle the word of truth well and live and lead with integrity and faithfulness.

As you read the stories in these pages, be encouraged by the impact that your support has made in educating and equipping men and women to help lead the church in reaching Canada and beyond with the Good News of Jesus Christ. Be inspired by the exciting growth in Teaching Church partnerships. And finally, be faithful in prayer for our students, faculty, and staff as we live and lead for Jesus and his mission.



*Mark Wessner, Ph.D. is President of MB Seminary and Associate Professor of Biblical Studies for Leadership.*

**SHAPING LEADERS, CHANGING LIVES**



# TEACHING CHURCHES

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COURSES SOLD

Imagine if everyone in your church had the opportunity to take MB Seminary training to strengthen their ministry effectiveness. Now, imagine if they could do the training onsite in the place where your church normally meets and that the content was carefully designed for your ministry context—to help equip your people to better live out the mission God has entrusted to your church.

This is MB Seminary's new Teaching Church initiative! Teaching Churches are churches across the country who partner with MB Seminary and function as learning hubs for seminary graduate courses and personal development training.



Last year, Willingdon Church (Burnaby, BC) and North Langley Community Church (Langley, BC) became our first two Teaching Churches. In the Fall, we did onsite teaching weekends around two topics, *Missional Discipleship* and *Interpreting Scripture Today*. Students are now engaging with the topic, *Christian Leadership Practices*, and will explore *Pastoral Care* in March and April. To date, we have had 73 course registrations across the first three courses. Students who successfully complete all four courses are eligible to receive the MB Seminary Ministry Foundations Certificate (either the Graduate or Continuing Education version). Students who complete the graduate version of the certificate also have the option of transferring the courses into a master's degree program at MB Seminary or another seminary.



Pastor Rob Penner oversees theological education and the International Language Ministries at Willingdon. When asked about how these courses have impacted students, Rob responded:

*“The students have ALL commented repeatedly that the courses have been beneficial both in terms of ministry and their own relationships to God...the level of investment each has made is bearing the fruit of deeper reflection, personal revival and effective ministry.”*

This is why I serve at MB Seminary! I had the privilege of teaching the first Teaching Church course. As I taught and interacted with students in Willingdon’s Chapel during the teaching weekend, I felt a deep sense of excitement. I was helping to bring the seminary to the church—to work together to equip their people to reach Canada and the world with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

The Teaching Church vision is growing! We are in active conversations with other MB churches in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and BC about partnering together to equip their people. We are also starting to dream about partnerships outside of Canada. We are also in the process of developing a second certificate that we can offer to churches.

When asked why other churches should consider getting involved with the Teaching Church initiative, Pastor Rob at Willingdon responded,

*“MB Seminary has a lot of resources (teachers) and understands church ministry. Their approach to education is less ‘ivory tower’ and more kingdom-focused, Christ-centered and church-oriented. It’s important to take advantage of gifted and willing teachers within the MB family. From our experience, this has been an effective way of raising up and developing leaders.”*



The prayers and financial gifts of God’s people have made this “raising up and developing leaders” initiative possible. We are looking to the Lord for His continued blessing as we follow His lead in establishing additional Teaching Church partnerships in the days ahead.

If you are interested in exploring a Teaching Church partnership for your church, please contact me or anyone else on the MB Seminary team. We are here to help you and your church equip leaders for maximum kingdom impact.



**Randy Wollf, Ph.D. is Associate Professor of Leadership Studies and Practical Theology for MB Seminary.** When asked about why teaching churches are so important to the future of MB Seminary, Randy replied, *“I absolutely love that the Teaching Church initiative allows MB Seminary to work in close partnership with local MB churches to help equip their leaders for missional impact. It’s what the seminary is all about.”*



MB BIBLICAL SEMINARY

# GRADUATE STUDIES



SEMESTER HOURS SOLD

*For the past 15 years, April Zehr has worked as a Recreational Therapist in London ON, focusing on acquired brain injury rehabilitation. In her words, “needless to say, a calling into ministry was not on my radar...or so I thought.”*

After encouragement from her pastor, she decided to take an online MB Seminary course, *Foundations of Christian Leadership*, to “feel it out.” What she felt was God challenging her heart and soul! *“It was evident that God was re-shaping me and possibly pulling out some of my hidden dreams to fuel His mission for me. I officially answered yes to the call to become a part-time Associate Pastor at Kingsfield Zurich Mennonite Church (KZMC) with focus on Kids Ministry and Pastoral Care.”*

April wants to continue to learn, grow and be transformed by God, so she enrolled as a student with MB Seminary at ACTS, working toward her Diploma in Christian Studies. She has taken two courses with Dr. Randy Wolf and describes the experience this way

*“Strong enough words are not able to describe just how impactful these courses and his specific teachings have been. Randy invests wholeheartedly into his students and makes himself available.”*

In the fall of 2021, as she was transitioning into her role, she took the *Mentoring, Team Building and Equipping* course *“which gave me the tools, necessary learning, and confidence to develop what my pastoral role would look like in this challenging season.”*

In addition to her studies, April continues to work full time, 0.5 as Pastor and 0.5 as Recreational Therapist. Her aim is to complete her Diploma by the fall of 2023. Reflecting on her ministry she says, *“The members and community at KZMC bring me so much joy and hope for what we can accomplish together to grow and build Gods Kingdom.”*



**Terry Kaethler, MCS, is Director of Advancement for MB Seminary.** When reflecting on April's compelling story, Terry said, *“As one who has spent over 27 years in vocational ministry, I get excited about how the Seminary was able to play a role in April's discernment process. We exist “to educate and equip men and women to help lead the church”, and our involvement with April helped her follow the nudges of God's Spirit. As a result, we now have the privilege of educating and equipping her for her role in the local church. This is exactly what MB Seminary is about.”*

**Roman Bondartchouk** was born in a mining town in Northern Russia to, in his words, “a typical Soviet family.” Religion held little interest since societal understanding was that “there was no God.” He, however, thought about the meaning of life and his place in the world but felt he might never be able to find answers to those questions.

In 1995, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Roman came to Canada looking for a better life. A year later, at a Slavic Evangelical Church in Edmonton, he became a follower of Christ. His wife, Kate, joined him in Canada in 1997, and together they moved to Vancouver. Two years later they began attending the Russian Language Ministry at Willingdon Church where Kate also became a Christian!

Four years ago, Roman became a leader in that same Russian Language ministry, shepherding a mix of believers and individuals still seeking. His area of focus is preaching and teaching, where he seeks “to pull everyone to the centre—Christ. With the main goal being for everyone to become more Christ-like.”



*“What I really want in life is to be as useful to the Lord in advancing His Kingdom as I possibly can. I believe that having seminary education might be the right step in this direction.” —Roman Bondartchouk*

Roman began formal studies through MB Seminary’s Teaching Church initiative with Willingdon Church. He believes that God will continue to equip and guide him throughout his studies and help increase his ministry effectiveness even further. *“I have already made a couple of significant changes in my ministry and am thinking of implementing more ideas I have learned.”*



**Mark Wessner, Ph.D. is President of MB Seminary and Associate Professor of Biblical Studies for Leadership for MB Seminary.** Mark taught Roman in his Interpreting Scripture Today course this fall, and when asked to comment on Roman’s inspiring testimony, he replied, *“Romans’ life and commitment to ministry are a great example of the convergence of church, leadership, and training that is at the heart of the mission of MB Seminary!”*



# DEVOTIONAL RESOURCES



DEVOTIONAL READERS

Hearing from God when reading the Bible is foundational to discipleship and critical to the mission of MB Seminary. And yet, we know that regular Bible reading (and comprehension) amongst Jesus-followers continues to decrease each year. The devotional resources that we develop during the seasons of Advent and Easter is motivated by our desire to equip people to cherish the Scriptures and the format of the devotions is designed to help people develop skills in their observation, interpretation, and application of the text.

One of our readers expressed their profound appreciation for the 2021 Lent Devotional *All Things New* with these words:

*“Due to some poor early experiences with Revelation, I almost didn’t sign up for the devotions. **Now, I am so glad that I did! It was so uplifting to see Revelation through “fresh” eyes, and a pleasure to share the “trip” through the book.**”*

During Advent, we chose biblical passages listed in the Revised Common Lectionary and called readers to reflect on the significance of Christ’s birth through our devotional entitled *As We Wait*. One reader, whose church was significantly impacted by the flooding on the Sumas flats in November 2021, shared with us:

*“Advent is always a chaotic season and sometimes it is hard to make time to slow down for regular Bible reading. The chaos has been even greater this year with all the flooding and things in our church that we’ve been doing to help with that. **I have very much appreciated the easily accessible devotional with the words of encouragement and hope that I can read** as I drink my morning coffee and start the day! Thank you for putting it together and sharing it with us!”*

These devotionals, in part, extend the work of the seminary to our MB family across Canada. Join us for our upcoming 2022 devotional resource for Lent featuring texts from the Book of Hebrews. Hebrews is often maligned as a riddle, yet its value in connecting the dots between the First and Second Testaments adds a richness and depth to the sufficiency of Christ that readers won’t want to miss. Sign up at [mbseminary.ca/devotions-sign-up/](https://mbseminary.ca/devotions-sign-up/)



**Keith Reed, MA, is Director of Ministry Support for MB Seminary.** When asked what excites him about producing these devotional resources, Keith replied, *“I love the diversity that shines through in the devotions! Some of this is represented by authors from various backgrounds and life phases. But it is also evident in how the Holy Spirit equips people to notice different emphases in the text and relate these truths to our current world.”*

When asking how our relationship with Jesus should shape our view on a given issue, it is tempting to think that we have control over the issues we will address, and the moments when we will respond to them. But here's the rub. We don't choose the issues, or the moments. They choose us. That is why MB Seminary hosts *Navigate: Faith and Life with MB Seminary*, a 90-minute conversation open to everyone. It is designed to help by preparing us for questions that we know are coming, even if we don't know when.



In 2021, MB Seminary hosted two *Navigate* Events. The first on February 9th, featured Dr. Darrell Johnson on the topic "6 Principles to Navigate Revelation." This presentation featured a high-level view of the major themes of the book of Revelation. It was developed to help viewers not merely understand the end in light of their times, but to understand their times in light of the end.

The presentation was driven by a desire to equip individuals for MB Seminary's 2021 Easter Devotional, *All Things New*, which led readers through the entire Book of Revelation during the season of Lent.



The second event held in May featured two MB Seminary faculty, Dr. Bruce Guenther and Dr. Brian Cooper, along with marriage and family therapist Alisha Stobbe. This discussion was designed to help Christians consider how to interact with social media well while navigating its dangers and pitfalls. It sought to help answer the question: How can we thrive in this media-saturated world and help nurture and shape our families and friends to healthy interactions that bring about God's intention of flourishing communities?

# NAVIGATE FAITH AND LIFE

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NAVIGATE PARTICIPANTS



**Brian Cooper Ph.D. is Associate Professor of Theology for MB Seminary.** *When asked of the importance of *Navigate*, he responded, "Pressing questions around issues like MAiD and social media are not going away. Christians need to learn to think about them faithfully and respond as followers of Jesus Christ. As a theology professor at MB Seminary, I believe I have been called, gifted, and equipped to help Christians do this, without avoiding or denying the problems. Rather, I am convinced that it is possible to be bold, loving, and unafraid—at the same time. My goal is to help believers play the long game through growth in faith and witness over the months and years to come.*



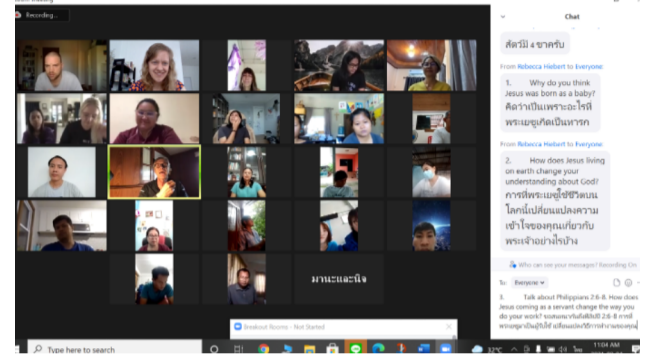
# MISSIONAL LEADERSHIP



GLOBAL LEADERS TRAINED

**Missional Leadership Training (MLT)** is non-formal modular training that prepares leaders to serve and equip the global church to live on mission. MLT is being developed through a partnership between MB Seminary and Multiply on behalf of the International Community of Mennonite Brethren (ICOMB). There are 18 modules in development, which are currently being translated into 10 different languages.

While this COVID season has brought significant challenges, the training has continued in creative ways. For example, in Thailand, when people were not allowed to gather in groups, 30 leaders from around the country gathered over Zoom one hour a day, five days a week for five weeks to participate in the MLT training.



These daily sessions not only provided the opportunity to study the Scriptures, but through the many breakout sessions, these Thai church leaders were also able to build much deeper relationships with each other and discover new ways they could work together.



Another example is Sam Arcano, who leads the MB Conference in the Philippines, and who has participated in earlier MLT training events with their churches. This year he spent several months on another island to encourage new church leaders in that area who do not have access to ministry training. He taught MLT Modules 1 and 2 and was very encouraged with how these young leaders engaged together around the teaching.

In response to this interest, Sam is translating these modules into the local Tagalog language so leaders can use the material in their own churches. Sam exemplifies how training trainers extends the equipping of the church through MLT.

Such is the ongoing impact of MLT training, as leaders within the global MB family share and pass on what they have learned through their own teaching and leading in Jesus' church.



**Doug Heidebrecht, Ph.D.** is Associate Professor of Mission and Theology for MB Seminary. When asked what excites him about MLT and the partnership between ICOMB, Multiply and the seminary, Doug replied, *"it is so exciting to serve our larger global family of churches where there is such a tremendous need for biblical teaching that calls the church to join in God's mission."*