

# CONNECT

FALL 2018 / MB SEMINARY NEWSLETTER



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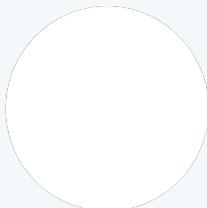
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# Message from the President

## *A Message From Mark*



**Mark Wessner**

*President, MB Seminary*

Have you ever noticed that we have a tendency to label almost everyone and everything? That person is conservative. That person is liberal. They're an extrovert. They're an introvert. The list seems to go on forever!

Now think of the "Mennonite Brethren" label. Taken separately, neither "Mennonite" nor "Brethren" alone are accurate descriptors of who we actually are (especially if we think beyond our own country). Combined together, though, "Mennonite Brethren" describes a Jesus-centred movement of spiritual renewal and mission that was launched in South Russia in 1860.

MB Seminary pursues the mission and vision of educating and equipping men and women who help lead the church (through biblical teaching, spiritual renewal, and mission) in reaching Canada and the world with the good news of Jesus. That is an exciting ministry to be a part of—and it wouldn't be possible without the partnership and generosity shown by our amazing supporters!

What are the values that MB Seminary prioritizes as we educate, equip, and train followers of Jesus to serve God and the world well? It seems to me that to be "Mennonite Brethren" is to hold to seven core convictions together (like petals in a flower, all seven must stay connected; we can't pick one and ignore the others):

- Authority of the Bible
- Centrality of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection
- Personal conversion and salvation
- Proclamation of the Gospel
- Believers' Church ecclesiology
- Faithful discipleship (individually and collectively)
- Holistic mission and peacemaking

As you read the stories and ministry updates shared in this issue of *Connect*, I invite you to look for the threads of Bible, renewal, and the greater mission as we strive to live out our MB values in everything we do.

Thank you to everyone who has reached out to offer support as we enter a new school year. Together, we are preparing future leaders to share the good news of Jesus Christ in Canada and beyond!

Sincerely,

Mark Wessner  
*President, MB Seminary*

# ABOUT MB SEMINARY

We are so grateful to each one of our generous supporters who are helping shape the future and vitality of church communities across Canada and around the world. It's your support that makes what we do possible! In an effort to give you a glimpse into the impact you are making, we want to share with you our Mission and Core Values, as well as our Priority Areas we will focus on in the next 3 years.

## *Mission Statement*

MB Seminary exists to educate and equip men and women to help lead the church in reaching Canada and beyond with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

## *Core Values*

MB Seminary is centred on Mennonite Brethren theology, values, and practices which are grounded in an integrated evangelical-Anabaptist worldview.

MB Seminary emphasizes ministry excellence in all areas, including teaching, leadership, communication, and collaboration.

MB Seminary provides culturally relevant education and training that reflects theological integrity and is directly applicable to existing and emerging Christian leaders and churches.

MB Seminary prioritizes strategic partnerships with other academic institutions, denominational conferences and ministries, and individual churches.

MB Seminary's financial framework is accessible and transparent, reflects high financial standards, and prioritizes the importance of a balanced budget.

## *Priority Areas*

### **Accessible and Distributed Education**

MB Seminary provides education and training that results in transformed lives and ministries, and will increase graduate enrolment, expand into borderless education, and continue to establish teaching and training relationships with churches and partners across Canada and beyond.

### **Ministry-Focused Theological Leadership**

MB Seminary comes alongside Mennonite Brethren churches, ministries, pastors and leaders by creating resources in various forms (print, video, in-person) to address key theological and leadership topics that are relevant to ministry and mission in Canada today.

### **Sustainable Financial Framework**

MB Seminary operates with an annual budget that provides for ongoing sustainable core ministries and strategic growth, recognizing that significant improvement in development is critical to the seminary's sustainability and success.

Please give today to support our leaders of tomorrow!

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## Then And Now

*A look at how MB Seminary influenced alumni lives.*

### Darlene

*Darlene Klassen is the Kids Pastor at Lakeview Church  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan*

Attending seminary in 1990 became a pivotal decision in my life after an accident claimed the life of my first husband. Several key conversations and experiences drew me to Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, so I decided to pack up my two little girls and move to Fresno, California. There, I discovered in the seminary a vibrant faith community, and completed a Master of Divinity, with a focus on Church and Family Ministries.



Those three years were a profoundly shaping time in my life. They gave me a chance to wrestle long and hard with things that mattered to me and come out with a stronger sense of who God was and who the church was—I realized

this was something worth investing in and living for.

I met Randy, my second husband, at seminary. When we graduated, we moved to Coaldale, Alberta. I invested my time in various ministries at the local church and the provincial conference, as well as leading parenting classes in the community through Child and Family Services. As our family continued to grow, so did my passion for discipleship and mentorship.

For the past 3 years, I have been serving as Kids Pastor at Lakeview Church. The hunger I developed in seminary to understand God better has lasted my lifetime and continues to grow deeper. I'm passionate about developing our next generation of leaders. In my years in ministry, I have seen that God is active and present in far more ways than I could have imagined. He is always at work, his Spirit renewing us and drawing people to him.



### Keith

*Keith Poysti is the Ministry Assistant with Mennonite Brethren Church of Manitoba  
Winnipeg, Manitoba*

It's hard to believe that it's been 35 years since I graduated from the Mennonite Brethren Seminary in Fresno, California. Those formative years at seminary set me on a path that has been dynamic and more fulfilling than I could have imagined.



After completing my Master of Arts in Biblical Studies, I was offered my first pastoral position in Winnipeg, Manitoba in 1984. That was the beginning of a lifetime devoted to pastoring. I've held many different positions in the church, each teaching me something different about myself and my passion for ministry.

Most recently, I served for 11 years as Conference Pastor with the Mennonite Brethren Conference of Manitoba. In this role, I tried to be a resource for pastors and church leaders as they pursued their God-given mission. The best part of my job, bar none, was meeting with pastors one-on-one to offer guidance, a listening ear, and most of all, encouragement.

Over these years, my views have broadened

## Leonard

*Leonard Klassen is the Co-Lead Pastor at King Road MB Church Abbotsford, British Columbia*

Now that I am entering my 19th year of ministry at King Road MB Church in Abbotsford, BC, I can look back on my early days in seminary with a fresh perspective.



I arrived at seminary in 2001 after working for 6 years as a youth pastor at King Road. I knew I wanted to further my education and make a bigger commitment to ministry. What I didn't realize was how deeply I would fall in love with

scripture and biblical exegesis. When I graduated in 2003 with a Master of Arts in Church Ministry, I brought this love with me into a new associate pastoral role at King Road. I now serve as the Co-Lead Pastor at King Road. It seems too easy nowadays to listen to or watch something about

incredibly to see God's plan for the universe in a more global, collective frame. Although I'm now semi-retired, this summer I am working in the area of credentialing for pastors who are new to Canada. I am so inspired by these pastors and leaders. At great cost and sacrifice to themselves and their families, they are leading new churches here in Winnipeg and doing a phenomenal job. I believe that we will learn from each other and discover new ways of expressing our shared faith.



the Bible rather than study it for oneself, but at King Road, we make a strong effort to equip and encourage our congregation to delve into scripture personally and live out Christ's calling.

Something else that has grown exponentially over the years is the value and importance of authentic relationships—walking together as brothers and sisters in Christ. I've seen time and time again how important it is for a church community to be a welcoming space for everyone. We don't have to have it all, we don't need to be perfect, but we do have to have each other's backs, spurring each other onward to love and good deeds.

God has called me as a leader to equip others for ministry, and calls all of us to make disciples. That's what continues to drive me and I'm so grateful that we have people who are excited to join us on that journey.





## Paving the Way

### *A MinistryLift Update from Keith Reed*

Over the last 12 months, we have been blessed to see MinistryLift's path being paved by inspired supporters and growth. In November, the program developed 15 workshops and 9 TED-style talks for the 2017 Equip Conference on the topic of transforming discipleship. The Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches provided training to more than 400 people, offering an opportunity to bring attention to MinistryLift and its church-based training services.

**"This has been the highest rated event in MinistryLift's history!"**

MinistryLift has also been busy enhancing its Small Group Ministry Training – a service designed to provide ministry directors with the tools needed to raise up new leaders and provide them with ongoing training and support. This is a unique program that offers preparative leadership services, regardless of previous experience levels.

This year has also fostered the creation of the Renovated Parenting Conference – a simulcast event which allows participating churches to easily host parenting conferences that are customized for their community. The event

encourages parents to benefit from live teaching sessions while connecting with others over lively table conversations. Eight churches in BC hosted this conference and provided incredibly positive feedback, making it the highest-rated event in MinistryLift's history.

Looking forward, a multi-province parenting simulcast called "Responsible Discipline" is being planned for October, with the hope of reaching even more parents across Canada.

These exciting advancements would not have been possible without the help of our generous supporters. We are so thankful for the passionate individuals who have helped us uplift and inspire committed followers of Jesus Christ, by bringing MinistryLift to the forefront of ministry training services in Canada.

MinistryLift provides tangible support to churches and church leaders.

To support MinistryLift, visit:  
[MBSEMINARY.CA/DONATE](http://MBSEMINARY.CA/DONATE)

# Seminary: a Knowledge and Culture Exchange

## *Fernando's Seminary Story*

Just over a year ago, Fernando made the 10,000 km journey from Paraguay to Langley, BC. For him, it's already been a life-changing experience.

Fernando decided to transfer from his Mennonite Brethren Church in Paraguay to MB Seminary in Langley, BC after being offered a scholarship. He and his wife were overwhelmed and excited by the generous opportunity.

Fernando has now completed one year of his Master of Arts in Theological Studies, with a focus on the New Testament. *"I have deeply appreciated how the seminary blends rigorous theological studies with the heart aspect of pastoral leadership,"* says Fernando. *"This time in Canada has already been such a blessing to me and my wife."*

***"I have deeply appreciated how the seminary blends rigorous theological studies with the heart aspect of pastoral leadership."***

***-- Fernando***

Very quickly Fernando started to take an interest in the cultural differences present in how academic studies are treated in Paraguay vs Canada, seeing unique value in each. He shares, *"In Paraguay, there's more of a Latin American communication style, with dialogue and debate being a central part of every class. In Canada, I've noticed more of a lecture-style. I think this style has helped me take on a more objective and critical-thinking approach."* Fernando has also come to appreciate the care and effort professors at MB Seminary take to

mentor and guide their students. *"When we get our papers back, they are filled with thoughtful remarks,"* says Fernando. *"The professors here are meticulous and interested, and it feels like they really care. That's something I haven't really experienced before and I'd like to bring back home with me."*

In the future, Fernando hopes to go back to Paraguay and teach at the Bible College that he studied at before. *"That is my dream. If God has something different for me that's okay too, but I do feel a strong calling to bring my learning back to Paraguay in some way or another,"* says Fernando. *"I'm so thankful to God and to the Mennonite Brethren Conference. This journey, just begun, is already giving me invaluable tools to go out and support others in their pursuit of faith and ministry. I'm looking forward to seeing what the next year holds for me!"*

Please give today to support our leaders of tomorrow!

**[MBSEMINARY.CA/DONATE](https://mbseminary.ca/donate)**

## More From the MB Community

### *Advent Devotional Book*

*As We Wait* is an Advent devotional book for the Christmas season, written by members of our Canadian MB family from across the country. Beginning on the first Sunday of Advent, this book will guide you through 24 daily readings that anticipate the birth of Jesus. The devotionals are written for people of various ages so that families and small groups can interact with the themes and consider applications together.

Order print copies by visiting:  
[MBSEMINARY.CA/ADVENT-2018](http://MBSEMINARY.CA/ADVENT-2018)



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