Update from Executive Director, Canada

Fall 2024

The CRC is in a tough spot. There is a sense of brokenness within our community. What I hear over and over again from a wide variety of people is how much *sadness* and *uncertainty* there is.

**Sadness & Uncertainty**

My kids were pretty young when we moved from Thunder Bay to Brantford, Ontario. They were really sad. Sure, they had some excitement about what was next, but they were grieving the loss of what they had.

Our temptation as parents was to try to cheer them up. But we decided instead to lean into the sadness together. We told our kids: it is *good* to be sad. It would actually be far worse if we were *happy* to be leaving. We were sad because of the deep relationships we had and the love we experienced. The house we lived in was comfortable and familiar and we would miss it. There were special events that we would no longer be part of after we moved. It was all quite sad *because it mattered*.

As a denomination, no matter what happens next, it will not be the same as it was before. My temptation, even now, is to try to cheer everyone up. But I believe it is ok to sit in the sadness, at least for a while. And this is true for all of us in the CRC.

Many of us are also uncertain about how decisions made at synod will affect our churches, councils, classis, and denominational ministries. There is uncertainty about how classis meetings will go this fall. Church Visitors and Regional Pastors are uncertain about expectations placed on them and how to walk with pastors well. I hear from pastors who are uncertain about what this means for effective pastoral care and how they will be perceived by their colleagues as they navigate the complexities of life with people.

I could go on. But I would like to note just how much powerlessness there can be in uncertainty. Many churches and pastors feel stuck in the uncertainty, and feel like this has all been forced onto them from the outside. Many are weary.

**Ministry Together**

In the midst of sadness, uncertainty, and weariness, I also find myself talking with many churches who are experiencing healthy, robust, and fresh opportunities for ministry in their local setting. Earlier this year, we hosted a “Stories and Strategies” meeting to share these experiences of ministry across Canada, and they were inspiring! We are also hosting a binational initiative called “Gather” that brings church leaders together to share how God is working in our congregations and communities, and wonder about how we could live into this in even stronger ways. We're also starting to gear up for the next Canadian National Gathering, where we can imagine and plan together as a national community.

My role is to ensure the denominational ministries are effectively supporting our churches. While I’d like to share all the different resources and opportunities, I often tell people I just want you to start with the assumption that the ministries can be helpful. No matter what you’re facing, wondering about, struggling with, or finding success in: assume that there are good supports or partnership opportunities through your denominational ministries. People are often surprised at how much is available and how helpful it is. And when you share with us, we can share your experience with others allowing you to be part of the support other churches like yours receive.

Also, in the past few years, we’ve done a lot to strengthen and solidify our shared ministry in Canada. Your classis elects the members who sit on the Canadian Ministry board overseeing the ministry, and we have complete independence to discern and decide what ministry will best support churches and be a witness to our national community. My hope is that we can continue to work together to sustain and even increase the witness of our churches locally, nationally, and around the globe.

**Renewal of All Things in Christ**

I have been reflecting more and more on how all things are renewed in Christ. I do often wish he would hurry up and finish the job. But I believe that life is a journey of sanctification: every experience, every joy, every failure, every sadness, every uncertainty, every dying & rising with Christ is a contributor to our growing in Christlikeness. Sometimes we (and others around us) are not quite as far along our salvation journey as we would hope, and it often is measured in steps both forward and backward. But Christ is moving us toward the fullness of our salvation, this I am sure of. So we remain patient and tenacious as we seek the renewal of all things together.

As we continue this path, my commitment is to ensure that our shared ministries are there to support you in your local ministry and in what we can do regionally, nationally, and around the world. I’m grateful for all the ways you all continue to welcome us into this journey with you.

With deep gratitude,



Rev. Albert Postma  
Executive Director, Canada