

“On Mission Together”

Saskatchewan Conference of MB Churches

Director’s Calendar

January

- 11-12 – Transitional Leadership Training
- 15 – Forest Grove Community Church (Saskatoon)
- 18-19 – Transitional Leadership Training
- 19 – CCMBC National EB Mtg.
- 20 – SKMB Ex. Bd. Mtg. (Saskatoon)
- 22 – Riverbend Fellowship (Borden)
- 24-26 – Pastor Clusters
- 26 – National Town Hall
- 29 – Kelstern Community Church

February

- 5 – Grace Fellowship Church (Saskatoon)
- 8 – SK. Denominational Leaders Mtg.
- 12 – Hillside Christian Fellowship Church (Beechy)
- 14 – National Ministry Team Mtg.
- 19 – Woodrow Gospel Chapel
- 26 – Hepburn MB Church

March

- 2 – CCMBC National EB Mtg.
- 5 – Riverhurst Community Church
- 12 – Christian Fellowship church
- 19 – Dalmeny Community Church
- 24-25 – Assembly 2023
- 26 – Anchor Church (Regina)
- 26 – Mission Pentecostal Church (Regina)

Please pray for traveling mercies.

Last Days, First Days

Seven key practices that help one navigate endings and beginnings

By Rev. Phil Gunther, SKMB DM



“There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under the heavens.”

Ecclesiastes 3:1 NIV

“Your life does not get better by chance. It gets better by change.”

Jim Rohn

It is the season of making resolutions. Sadly, it is also the season of failed ones too. The gym I used to go to always had a throng of newcomers the first week of January. These newly passionate champions for fitness with their pristine Nike exercise gear enthusiastically sweated out push ups, jogged on treadmills, and pumped iron. The energy in the place was amazing! A month later most had determined their resolve to become fit or lose weight had waned and subsequently reduced their attendance. Three months later most sought ‘greener pastures.’

Full disclosure, I don’t make New Year’s resolutions, at least in the commonly understood manner. I do concur that January is a natural space to end certain things in one’s life as well as begin new things. This is true for disciples of Jesus. What I have repeatedly noted, however, is that most efforts to make life changes – an ending or a beginning – are poorly weighed and planned. I was among this ill-equipped group and found it incredibly frustrating. And so, I developed a set of principles regarding the process behind any significant life change whether it be in the winter, spring, summer or fall. I hope these principles will be of help to you.

Practice #1 – Pray about the trajectory of your life and ask God that it be in alignment with His will.

This seems like a no-brainer for a disciple of Jesus and yet, it all too often plays a minor role; an after-thought. The reality is that the most powerful ‘tool’ for life change – either ending something or beginning something – is done upon one’s knees. Remember Daniel and the lion’s den or Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, when it was death or life, an end or a beginning, they prayed seeking to be at the center of God’s will. Unfortunately, it is not common for disciples to commit their significant life change decisions under God’s ‘microscope’ beforehand, usually there is only a request for His blessing. I believe the counsel of James is paramount: “... you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that” (James 4:15 NIV).

Practice #2 – Draft a clear, realistic, achievable, and informed goal.

This past fall my wife and I took a road trip to celebrate my 60th birthday. We wanted to drive to several sites in the USA. After several days of deliberation, we pulled out a map and charted our travel noting what we wanted to see, where we wanted to stay and how much it would cost. Yes, we did leave lots of room for adventure and unplanned detours. I might be 60, but

I’m still spontaneous! All this to say, if you are wanting to end something significant or begin something important, have a clear, relevant and informed goal. Some might find the S.M.A.R.T. goal setting resource helpful (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound).

Practice #3 – Be real about your circumstances and the degree of commitment needed to make a specific life change.

Self-awareness is crucial for making significant life changes. Understanding your history, past decisions and your present process of engaging life, is absolutely foundational for putting in place any course correction. You need to be brutally honest with yourself here; no

Supporting SKMB Churches and Camps in Making Disciples

rationalizing away either the trouble or the opportunity staring you in the face. Furthermore, weighing your capacity to 'stick-it-out' until the end – your commitment to the changes – is a must for any chance of success. In short, if you don't have 'gas-in-the-tank' for the changes you want to see happen, you need to rethink your approach, enlist more help from the Holy Spirit and trusted others in order to bridge the resolve gap.

Practice #4 – Seek honest insight and forthright constructive counsel from trusted others.

Scripture reminds us that *"Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed"* (Proverbs 5:22 NIV). It is simply wise to seek the counsel of mature and capable trusted others to speak to your desire to end something or begin something. Such counselors will no doubt know much about you and the path you are planning to travel, both will serve to be of helpful benefit.

Practice #5 – Remind yourself that, in and of itself, the JOURNEY of ending and beginning something is incredibly important and transformative.

Tennis star Arthur Ash once said, *"Success is a journey, not a destination. The doing is often more important than the outcome."* American Rock climber Yvon Chouinard stated, *"How you climb a mountain is more important than reaching the top."* I have discovered much wisdom in these words as I contemplated and then implemented my own significant life changes. There is so much to learn in the process of ending or beginning something – the journey – and so, be mindful in that space.

Practice #6 – Strive for micro changes and small victories.

I am convinced that part of the reason so many people experience failed New Year's resolutions is because they bite off more than they could or should 'chew.' It is much better to make small (micro) changes toward your goal than to jump in with both feet, make a big splash, but soon petter out. Attempting micro changes, and experiencing a victory in them, inspires one to take the next small step and the next one and so on. For example, the common wisdom on weight loss is not to reduce a huge amount of weight in a short period of time, but rather to make small progressive (micro) changes in your eating habits over an extended period. In other words, form a new lifestyle. Research has found such a tactic results in long-term weight loss and healthy weight maintenance.

Practice #7 – Prepare yourself for the possibility that an ending or a beginning may require significant courage and resolve.

It has been my experience that the significant life changes I have pursued – endings or beginnings – have all required a notable degree of courage and resolve and, to be honest, faith. It takes courage to end a relationship or a particular work. It takes courage to deal with an addiction or accept chemotherapy. It takes courage to leave one job and start another or end one career with no prospects for another. It takes resolve to stick with your decision to end or begin something. My father taught me that when you choose a path, never look back, look forward and boldly march on. And, if you have made the wrong decision, don't worry, God will be able redeem it. Remember, you will at times fail along the path you choose, but view them as failing forward and not falling back.

For now, blessings on the ending or the beginning you have set your eyes upon. God is with you. God is for you.

"Sunsets are evidence that endings can be beautiful."

Common Maxim

"To make an end is to make a beginning."

Common Maxim

Assembly 2023
March 24-25
Hard-Pressed
MISSION in light of Christ's Return

Director of Ministry
Rev. Philip A. Gunther
Call or text:
306-533-6191
Email: phil@skmb.ca
604 Webster St.
Saskatoon SK S7N 3P9
Website & News Letter Administrator
Heather Filazek
Email: office@skmb.ca


Congratulations to our DM!



Phil Gunther, our Director of Ministry, has been published. His work **Letters to my Friends** is available at Kindred Productions. Gunther will be gifting each SKMB church with a copy in 2023.

- SKMB Communications
[Link to purchase](#)

Holy Spirit—Fill Us!
by Ken Esau January 1, 2023



Our 2023 prayer focus is on the theme of "Holy Spirit—Fill Us!" and will involve prayers for God's filling us with the Holy Spirit so that we can participate in God's mission in the world. Please join the Canadian MB family as we pray.

READ MORE