

# “On Mission Together”

## Saskatchewan Conference of MB Churches

### The Changing Reality



If you haven't noticed yet, in the words of Bob Dylan, "The Times They Are a-Changin'." In our post-Christian reality, we slowly see our faith move from weird (think Ned Flanders) to annoying, to now being dangerous. This shift is becoming more and more visible. Last fall, an interesting story came out about Andrew Thorburn, who got hired as the CEO of Melbourne Australian Rules Football Club only to resign 24 hours later. He resigned because he was a Christian who attended a church that held orthodox Christian beliefs, particularly Christian beliefs around sexuality and issues of being pro-life.

As people discovered that Andrew was a Christian and that he went to a church that held orthodox theology, the backlash to his hiring began until he had to resign after a few hours of having the job. In his resignation, Andrew briefly stated, "My personal Christian faith is not tolerated or permitted in the public square." In his book, *Being the Bad Guys*, Stephen McAlpine says, "We (our culture) are being offered a rival gospel: a narrative that seeks first to expose the Christian gospel as bad news, and then to replace it with much needed good news." The good news of Jesus is now the bad news of Jesus; with it, we have become the bad guys.

There is a unique tension that comes with being followers of Jesus. I am reminded of this tension as our church goes through the book of Esther. In Esther chapter two, we are introduced to Mordecai and Esther, God's people living in exile in Susa. In chapter two, we encounter an interesting command from Mordecai to Esther. Esther 2:10 says, "Esther had not made known her people or kindred, for Mordecai had commanded her not to make it known." What becomes clear in chapter 2 of Esther and more so in chapter 3 is that to be identified with God's people as they lived in Susa would have put you in a dangerous place, and navigating this reality caused tension. In that tension, both Esther and Mordecai decided it was best to compromise their faith.

John Mark Comer perfectly explains the tension of living in a post-Christian world where you are the bad guy when he said, "Every day can feel like war on our souls. A spiritual assault on our faith. A fight to just stay saved. Or at least to stay orthodox, to stay

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

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faithful to Jesus, and to stay sane, much less to stay happy and at peace."

We must wrestle with how to navigate the tension of living in a post-Christian world where we are the bad guys. How can we encourage and equip our people to live out their faith in light of this new reality? Next month, we will look at some of the ways we can move forward, but right now, it starts with us understanding that nothing can stop God's plans and purposes from moving forward. No matter where culture goes or how dark and messed up our world gets, we know that God is on the throne, and He is working out all things for our good and His glory. What good news!

Luke Etelamaki  
 CMT Discipleship Coach

**Supporting SKMB Churches and Camps in Making Disciples**

# SKMB Leadership Collective



Did you know that 3 cohorts of young adults have completed the SKMB Leaders Collective program in the past 4 years, for a total of 22 alumni? This year we also engaged with a variety of MB leaders and pastors during our 2 weekend intensives, 2 Saturday workshops and at the SKMB Assembly.

Highlights this year included:

1. Using tools like story boards and the Enneagram to grow in our understanding of our own stories, personalities, gifts, and identity in Christ.
2. Learning through participatory workshops on organizational leadership, leadership & conflict, facilitation, and outcome based planning — all rooted in a desire to follow Christ together.
3. Engaging in listening prayer and lively conversations around discerning God's will, and our MB confession of faith.

Throughout the 6-month program many of our churches' mentors played a key role in accompanying participants as they continued in life and ministry.

We've continually worked to improve the program, while keeping cost's low. We are looking forward to learning together with next year's cohort. We do hope to have one of our retreats in a more central location closer to Regina. We've also simplified the application process. This year's early bird application is set for August 31, with a final deadline of September 30, 2023. We already have a number of young adults interested so we encourage people to start applying!

But enough words — check out our new promo video on our [website's homepage](#) and share it with a young adult you think would benefit from the program.

Jacqueline Block

Developmental Leadership Team (DLT)

## VIRTUAL CAFE



In the July/August Ministry Toolbox we have 10 links for you ranging from articles from the Mennonite Brethren world to some book recommendations as well as some general ministry links and resources.

## SABBATICAL RESPONSIBILITY CONTACTS

DM Sabbatical May 15 – September 17.

**CHIEF LIAISON:** Luke Etelamaki

[luke@skmb.ca](mailto:luke@skmb.ca)

Luke will monitor Director of Ministry emails and respond where needed.

He will also coordinate incoming requests, forwarding or responding as needed.

Lastly, Luke will attend SKMB EB mtgs.

**NATIONAL LIAISON:** Rod Schellenberg

[dlt@skmb.ca](mailto:dlt@skmb.ca)

Rod will be the SKMB liaison to CCMBC.

**COMMUNICATIONS:** Mike Engbers

[mike@parliamentchurch.com](mailto:mike@parliamentchurch.com)

Mike will create a *monthly* newsletter and provide website updates.

**CREDENTIALING:** Rick Schellenberg

[fit@skmb.ca](mailto:fit@skmb.ca)

**SK. JUSTICE OFFICIANT REGISTRATIONS:** Ron Dyck

[ron.dyck59@gmail.com](mailto:ron.dyck59@gmail.com)

**CRISIS ASSESSMENT/RESPONSE:** Scott Siemens

[mst@skmb.ca](mailto:mst@skmb.ca)

**THRIVE AND HORIZON LIAISON:** Stephanie Christianson

[sChristianson@horizon.edu](mailto:sChristianson@horizon.edu)

**PASTOR TRANSITIONS:** Don Froese

[donald.j.froese@gmail.com](mailto:donald.j.froese@gmail.com)

SAVE THE DATE OCT 26-28, 2023

# FIRE & ASHES

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