

Senior Staff Proposal

**Proposed Restructuring of Senior Staff of the
Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches**

Council of the Convention

Mr. Doug Schofield, President

Dr. Robert Knowles, Working Group Chair

Dr. Peter Reid, Executive Minister

February 2, 2011



CONVENTION of Atlantic Baptist Churches
CONVENTION des Églises Baptistes de l'Atlantique

SENIOR STAFF PROPOSAL

Convention at a Unique Point in its History

Certainly this is a critical time in the life of the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches. Ten years ago after a great deal of consultation and prayer, the Convention restructured its life together. Since that time, it seems as though the pace of change in our society has ramped up

“While forms and structures may change, the essence of the Gospel is relevant in every generation.”

completely to a new level. There is much to celebrate in terms of what we do together as a family of churches. Our Convention has a strong history with significant periods of renewal in communities and churches in Atlantic Canada with significant influence throughout the country and around the world. Historically a group of godly, Spirit led people gave leadership to a significant movement of church planting and spiritual awakening throughout Atlantic Canada. Although we are facing many challenges, we believe that God is still calling us to be faithful witnesses of His grace in challenging people to be devoted followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. While forms and structures may change, the essence of the Gospel is relevant in every generation.

We as Atlantic Baptists have been blessed with wonderful resources. God has positioned Atlantic Baptists to be a significant witness of the Kingdom of God in Atlantic Canada in the years to come. Others look at us and recognize our strengths:

- that we are the largest network of protestant evangelical churches in Atlantic Canada;
- as Christian people we have valued higher education which has led us to:
 - have our own seminary – Acadia Divinity College;
 - operate a Christian university – Crandall University;
- our Christian camping ministry;
- we host some of the largest Christian youth events in Canada;
- we have a Foundation with significant financial resources to assist churches and ministries with loans and grants;
- we have a large network of senior citizen homes, assisted living facilities, nursing homes and affordable senior housing;
- we have a number of churches which are faithful, effective, healthy and growing in ministry in their communities;
- we have excellent, caring staff who add value to our churches through pastoral support, training and, vision casting;
- we have been challenged in the past decade to address many issues such as systemic racism, mental health, issues of poverty, and living simply as well as caring for the environment;

- we have a strong partnership with Canadian Baptist Ministries in Global Mission sending a significant number of full time Field Staff as well as many short term missionaries worldwide.

Irrespective of the positive stories, it is also true that we are at a critical point in our history as a Convention and there is a need for a paradigm shift in thinking if we are going to follow the Spirit's leading into the future. To begin a discussion on the need for change in an organization may sound like an indictment on those who presently serve. This is not the case, it must be noted that our current staff have done an amazing job with limited resources at hand. Our senior staff and our support staff have a great sense of calling and mission with respect to their various

*“Part of our tradition is that we regularly change our tradition.”
- Teun van der Leer*

positions in the Convention family. Our Staff continues to make an important contribution in the life of this small family of churches.

Our need for change is aligned with a very complex and unique set of circumstances which almost every denomination in North

America is facing as a result of a changing culture. At many points in its history the church of Jesus Christ has had to regroup, pray, rethink, renew, and develop new structures (wineskins) to adapt to a new and different day. We too are facing such a time in the life of our denomination. In 2009, Baptists around the world celebrated 400 years of faithful witness to Christ. We stand on the shoulders of women and men who were courageous, bold, pioneering, forward thinking and prophetic. At a meeting in Amsterdam to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of the founding of our Baptist heritage, Dutch theologian, Teun van der Leer, told global Baptists on the opening night of a three-day celebration that change was at the heart of their tradition. Van der Leer, rector of the Dutch Baptist Seminary stated, "Being open to change is in our Baptist genes. It is in our DNA. Part of our tradition is that we regularly change our tradition." We must celebrate the past, but we must not live in the past, we must be willing to recognize that our forefathers were risk takers who were willing to adapt and change in challenging times.

A Call to Pray for Renewal

Our President, Mr. Doug Schofield, shared a vision to call people across Atlantic Canada to pray for Renewal in the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches. The following excerpt is taken from a letter Doug sent to pastors this Fall urging a number of prayer warriors join together to pray for the Convention family:

They have been asked to pray for three things:

1. Pray for spiritual renewal in our churches throughout Atlantic Canada.

- Pray that Atlantic Baptist would humble themselves and pray for personal and corporate spiritual renewal.
- Pray that Atlantic Baptists would seek God's presence and turn from the sins that hinder our effectiveness.
- Pray that Atlantic Baptists would claim God's promise to "heal our land."

2. Pray for guidance in the reorganization plan for CABC's Senior Staff.

- Pray for discernment and wisdom for the Executive Minister and CABC Council as they develop a plan for organization of Senior Staff that will allow us to work more effectively in the future.
- Pray for active engagement by our church family in the review process.
- Pray for a spirit of openness and creativity as we seek to minister more effectively to the people around us.

3. Pray for the CABC family to unite together under the new Incorporated Operating Bylaws.

- Pray for an open, honest and balanced evaluation in local church meetings on the issue of joining together as part of the incorporated CABC.
- Pray for a sense of gratitude within our family of churches for our shared history and ministry during the past 105 years.
- Pray for an attitude of anticipation for what the Holy Spirit wants to do among us as we surrender to His will.

The Warning Signs of Decline

Along with many other Christian organizations we are experiencing great challenges in these days. We are an older “mainline” denomination of aging churches many of which are serving Christ in shrinking communities. Just like the rest of the world, Atlantic Canada is affected by the Global trend of migration of people toward the urban centers. As well we are seeing an increasing number of people emigrating to Atlantic Canada, many settling in urban centers as well. A number of people in our churches are discouraged, tired and quite confounded because it seems that all of our efforts are not making the impact for the Kingdom of God we desire. Quite a few of our churches are in decline, attendance is shrinking, buildings are getting older and are in need of repair, heating costs are rising and there is a prevailing apathy in a number of our congregations. In the past, it seemed if we prayed more and worked harder we could attract many people to our churches. But, as Dorothy said in *The Wizard of Oz*, “We aren’t in Kansas anymore!”

Many of our churches are struggling with declining attendance and resources.

Certainly, as a denomination we are experiencing challenges in almost all areas of ministry. For approximately the past twenty years, apart from one or two exceptions, we have failed to meet our budget as a Convention. In fact it appears that for many years now we have received approximately 90% of the approved budget. A number of our churches are struggling to meet budgets and some have reduced or are seriously considering cutting their UIM giving in order to maintain local ministries. We are attempting to provide all of the current ministries to our churches yet struggling with the effect of inflation on ministry dollars. Staff regularly create an in house working budget based on 90% of the budget approved by Convention Council and the Assembly delegates.

As we move forward, it is imperative for the Convention to get its fiscal house in order and live within our means. This will mean finding ways to streamline and cut any fat from the budget,

yet, this alone will not be enough. For too long we have believed that the status quo is sustainable, it is not. As we consider restructuring and staffing in the twenty-first century it would be irresponsible to ignore the fiscal reality we find ourselves in.

The following signs are just a few indicators that we are in challenging times:

1. We have declined from more than 550 churches to fewer than 500 churches.
2. Only 527 baptisms recorded in our records for 2009.
3. Every year more and more of our churches are closing and losing visibility.
4. More churches are finding it difficult if not impossible to pay a full time salary for a pastor.
5. Many of our churches (75-80%) are in maintenance or survival mode.
6. Small and rural communities continue to shrink as more people move to urban centers.
7. There is a general malaise of spiritual apathy and a need for spiritual renewal in many of our churches.
8. We have engaged in very little church planting in the past decade as a family of churches.
9. UIM giving has been flat or in decline for the past twenty-five years, we receive approximately 90% of budget.
10. Because of inflation we give less money to our agencies, i.e.: CBM, Acadia Divinity College and Crandall University.
11. During the past twenty-five years at least 50% of ministry dollars given to UIM have been eaten away by inflation.
12. Pastors are entering ministry with large student debt and often little hope of receiving a salary which will adequately compensate.
13. 25 -35% of our pastors are struggling with stress and burnout.

“25 -35% of our pastors are struggling with stress and burnout.”

After reading this past segment of the report you might feel somewhat depressed, thinking it sounds hopeless. It is important to realize that we live in challenging days and, like many other denominations, we are facing difficult decisions and choices. Nevertheless, if we will humble ourselves, pray and seek God’s guidance, the future is pregnant with amazing opportunities. We must sense the urgency of this moment and see it as a divinely appointed time given to us by God to partner together to create a new reality to impact Atlantic Canada for the furtherance of the Kingdom of God for generations to come. Will future generations look back on our generation of Baptist leaders and call us godly, courageous, Kingdom builders?

Twenty-First Century Christian Leadership

What kind of leadership is required in the Denomination and in our churches if we are to experience the spiritual renewal and revitalization needed in our Convention? There is a need for a new type of empowered and revitalized leadership in the Convention of the future. If we are to continue to have a strong partnership together as a Convention of Churches, we as the people of

God will have to be willing to be part of the solution. It will mean we will have to take very seriously the Baptist Distinctive of the Priesthood of all believers. Every member is called to be a minister (1 Peter 2:5, Revelation 1:6).

“Leaders function best in community when they journey with other strong leaders.”

The following thoughts are meant to be descriptive of twenty-first century leaders:

- **Leadership must be transformational in nature and should be exercised by those who are on an intentional journey of spiritual formation; people, who are vulnerable, honest, open, integrated, holistic, becoming more like Christ.**
- **Leadership is much less about being an expert who provides programs and answers to people and far more about relationships, networking and connecting people to those who are involved in healthy, life-giving ministry.**
- **Leaders are entrepreneurial, strategic, make difficult decisions, and aren’t afraid to think outside the box; they take risks following the leading of the Holy Spirit.**
- **These leaders are not seeking to “do for” the church or the pastor, but rather to “empower” others to do for themselves, and for the sake of the Kingdom of God.**
- **Leaders function best in community when they journey with other strong leaders; they are not insecure and welcome feedback and constructive criticism.**
- **Leaders know their own strengths and weaknesses, they are free to concentrate primarily on their strengths and are quick to seek help from other gifted leaders.**
- **Leaders care about the advancement of the Kingdom of God and really don’t care who gets the credit.**

It is important that we embrace a new leadership paradigm at a time when everything in the world has shifted and it feels like we have lost our equilibrium. As already stated, this new type of leadership must be transformational which suggests that Christian leaders are ruthlessly dedicated to living as Jesus lived in the world. This style of leadership understands that capacity is always increased by delegating and entrusting others with leadership responsibility and always diminished when a leader attempts to control or hold on to the reigns of authority. These leaders are committed to walk in community with other Christian leaders and prayerfully discern the mind and heart of Christ.

In his book, *Revolution in Leadership*, Reggie McNeal describes the type of leadership needed in the North American Church at this time. He postulates that with the emergence of this new paradigm of leadership several important effects would be seen in organizations. The following is a summary of these key effects:

1. **A reemphasis on the spiritual dimensions of leadership.**
2. **New leadership practices that are more ecclesial, that is, plural in nature, team-oriented in expression, and based on giftedness and call.**

3. **Redefinition of ministry benchmarks, moving from church growth concerns to issues of missional effectiveness.**
4. **A return of the work of God to the people of God, with the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers serving as a theological paradigm for renewal.**
5. **A church in the world rather than sociologically cocooned from it.**
6. **Urban and regional evangelism strategies that involve alliances among Christian groups and churches of diverse denominational backgrounds.**

Many believe these six effects of leadership in the twenty-first century are necessary if denominations are going to experience Spiritual Renewal.

Writing our History in Advance

In the next few pages you will find a picture of what the future could look like in the CABC. The challenge we face provides a unique opportunity to dream of a new and renewed future as a denominational entity in Atlantic Canada. As leaders we should be open to pray and think about a new future for the churches and associations that make up the Convention. The following words of George Bernard Shaw once paraphrased by President John F. Kennedy are still relevant; *“There are people who look at the way things are and ask ‘Why?’ there are others who look at the way things could be and ask ‘Why not?’”*

There are significant opportunities for outreach, growth through starting new congregations as well as re-planting churches that have lost visibility. This means that as a Convention we must be willing to consider the potential and see the fields which are white unto harvest. It is interesting that groups like the Southern Baptists are aggressively targeting communities in Atlantic Canada for evangelism and Church Planting. There are communities in Atlantic Canada with little or no Christian witness. There are communities that are under-churched and need a greater Christian presence. There are churches that need renewal of a sense of vision and mission for the community they serve.

*We could have a greater impact
on our communities and our
world for the Kingdom of God.*

Many of these opportunities are among various ethnic groups in Atlantic Canada. There are great opportunities for new ministries and new churches among African Canadians; New Canadians, First Nations People, Acadians and other ethnic groups. As we strengthen our ties with the African United Baptist Association and the French Baptist Union and work together we will heighten our understanding and our effectiveness in ethnic ministry. We have this window of opportunity to be proactive and write our own history in advance. The status quo is not an option. If we try to maintain what we have we will surely continue down the slippery slope of spiritual lethargy and decline as a denomination.

If we as a family of churches take this mandate seriously and respond prayerfully we have an opportunity to be a stronger, healthier more vital Convention. Imagine a great host of 60, 000 followers who have experienced the reconciliation of God through the finished work of Christ walking in personal relationship with Christ. Imagine this host of Christians meeting for corporate prayer, worship and preparation for ministry and then being deployed as God’s agents of incarnation and reconciliation in the world. Imagine how such a committed group of Christ Followers could impact the world for Christ and his Kingdom.

What follows is a brief attempt to describe what the Convention could look like in the next 15 years if we humble ourselves and seek the Lord.

The Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches 2025:

1. Sixty-five new congregations birthed by 2025:

- ✓ 30 new churches will be planted in growth centers throughout Atlantic Canada with research and Spirit led targeting of un-churched and under-churched areas resulting in an average of 3 per year from 2015-2025;
- ✓ Many other models of church planting are equally relevant including: satellite churches, amalgamated churches, house churches, fresh expressions of church etc.
 - 10 new churches will be “replants” of former churches;
 - 10 small churches will start fresh expressions of church in their communities;
 - 10 new churches will emerge through congregational amalgamation;
- ✓ 25% of these new congregations will include Francophone, First Nations, New Canadians or other ethnic groups, with 15 congregations forming from within existing churches and then utilizing the facility and resources of the mother church.

2. Eighty percent of CABC churches will demonstrate a missional culture:

- ✓ Churches will be defined by the effectiveness of their ministry in their community and beyond;
- ✓ While effectively meeting the needs of members, churches will move people to an outward focus that utilizes the spiritual gifts of members; changing the benchmarks of success toward commissioning the laity to ministry in the community;
- ✓ Being committed to ministries addressing issues of poverty, affordable housing, literacy, justice for oppressed people groups, addictions recovery, disaster relief and stewardship of resources, etc.;
- ✓ These churches will have one or more intentional ministry of service or compassion in the community in which they worship;

“Churches will be defined by the effectiveness of their ministry in their community and beyond.”

- ✓ These churches will have one or more partnership with a community organization for the sake of enhancing the organization in its community work;
- ✓ In partnership with CBM and others: to identify, recruit, equip and send people to do global discipleship on both a part time and full time basis.

3. Actively developing effective, healthy Pastoral leadership:

- ✓ Strongly encouraging pastors to take part in regular continuing education experiences in partnership with Acadia Divinity College;
- ✓ Encouraging pastors to actively pursue transformation through spiritual disciplines becoming like Christ in the rhythms of engagement in ministry and disengagement for prayer and soul restoration;
- ✓ Encouraging pastors to be involved in small groups of peers to develop relationships, mentoring and, accountability;
- ✓ Encouraging pastoral leaders to engage in a healthy lifestyle of regular physical recreation, an understanding and emphasis on good nutrition, theological reflection as well as nurturing strong family relationships;
- ✓ Providing access to crisis counselling and intervention through Convention based resources including career counselling when appropriate.

4. Identifying effective, strong churches and volunteers called to share resources with others:

- ✓ Challenging regionally strong churches to deliberately take responsibility to support, encourage and resource other churches, new church plants, etc.;
- ✓ Challenge churches to release Senior Pastors and other ministry staff one day or more a month (up to 2 weeks a year) to mentor pastors and leaders from other churches;
- ✓ Identifying and challenging effective, growing, healthy churches (small 0-75 people), medium (75-200) and large (200- +), with an ethos of starting satellite churches and new congregations to release lay leaders to serve in new or existing congregations for the sake of building the Kingdom of God.

5. Creating a Convention structure that adapts to changes but is sufficient to undergird the ministry of CABC churches with required resources and help:

- ✓ Continuous review of ministry effectiveness and making adjustments based on needs, requests, and resources;
- ✓ Being fiscally responsible by establishing realistic budgets with expansion or cutting of services based on support of churches;
- ✓ Placing a high budget priority on missional activity and new congregations and ethnic ministries.

This is merely a snap shot of what the future could and should look like in the next 5 to 15 years. In order to begin the long process of turning the large ship called the “Convention,” we must begin to position ourselves through the designation of senior staff positions and to redirect our people and resources. These steps are necessary in order to make the kind of significant shift necessary in our denominational organization.

Senior Staff Proposal

The following proposal for Senior Staff restructuring is an attempt to address the present and future needs of Convention based on the “picture” of the future presented. Granted, this proposal is somewhat tempered by the reality of limited resources but it is an attempt to bring together our current and future needs while acknowledging that transition from our current situation will not be easy and should be conducted with prayerfulness and thoughtfulness.

Current Senior Staff Arrangement:

- Executive Minister (1 position)
- Director of the Atlantic Baptist Mission Board (1 position)
- Director of Operations (1 position)
- Director of Youth and Family (2 full time equivalent positions)
- Regional Ministers (5 plus two ½ positions)
- Director of Development (1/2 time position)
- Director of Public Witness and Social Concern (1/4 time position)

Future Senior Staff Arrangement:

- Executive Minister (1 position)
- Director of Operations (1 position)
- Director of Spiritual Formation/Clergy Care (1 position)
- Director of Youth and Family (1 full time and one half time position)
- Three Associate Executive Ministers (3 full time field positions)
- Director of Public Witness and Social Concern (1/4 time position)
- Director of Ethnic Ministries (1/4 time position)

“...address the future needs of Convention based on the “picture” of the future presented.”

In looking at a new Senior Staff arrangement, difficult decisions must be made regarding staff positions which remain and those which will be discontinued. In the new paradigm the following changes will be made, these positions will either be discontinued altogether or folded into a newly developed position:

1. The Director of the Atlantic Baptist Mission Board
2. The Director of Development
3. Regional Ministry
4. One half time position from the Youth and Family Department

Associate Executive Ministers

In this scenario the Regional Ministers and the Director of the Atlantic Baptist Mission Board are replaced by the Associate Executive Ministers of New Congregations and Church Renewal. Instead of 7 Regional Ministers there will be 3 Associate Executive Ministers who will also be placed strategically in geographic regions to best serve the Convention constituency. The Associate Executive Ministers will report directly to the Executive Minister and in addition to the job description found below each will carry another responsibility. The added responsibilities are as follows:

- Associate Executive Minister with responsibility for the Atlantic Baptist Mission Board
- Associate Executive Minister with responsibility for Ministry Placement
- Associate Executive Minister with responsibility for the Lay Pastors Training Program

Job descriptions for the Associate Executive Ministers will be “outcome” based and tied to the broader goals of Convention. This gives opportunity for measureable goals when evaluating performance. The following four categories will give broad stroke definition for the primary responsibilities of the 3 Associate Executive Ministers:

1. Church Planting and New Congregations

- Researching growth areas in unchurched or under churching communities
- Identifying locations and opportunities for new congregations
- Identifying and providing training for potential church planters
- Identifying and connecting with ethnic groups and new Canadians for church planting
- Grants and resourcing for congregations and new ministries/churches

2. Church Renewal and Missional Emphasis

- Connect churches and leaders to those who can help them understand the church’s biblical mission of being outward focussed
- Connect churches and leaders to resources for understanding culture and context of the unchurched
- Empower churches and leaders to replant dying churches or those churches that have lost visibility
- Be a networker of churches and leaders who are already involved in intentional missional activity in their communities and with those who wish to be more intentional
- Empower churches that wish to create a fresh expression of church in their community

3. Leadership Networker/Mentor

- Identifying and connecting emerging leaders with effective leaders for mentoring
- Serving as a catalyst for the clustering of leaders for peer mentoring and spiritual formation
- Identifying and training young and emerging leaders in the missional emphasis
- Helping to connect leaders with similar gifts and calling for a synergistic effect in church leadership

4. Development and Convention Story Telling

- Identifying and deploying volunteer Convention champions/fund raisers
- Telling the Convention story of missional activity and new congregations
- Working with the Executive Minister's Office to find or create new sources of funding

With the decrease in staff numbers, it is important to understand the need to utilize volunteers to enhance the ministry of Senior Staff. While the Senior Staff will continue to connect personally with the constituency, it will be crucial for Staff to recruit, train, and empower volunteer leaders. With a reduced field staff compliment there must be an awareness that Staff will not be able to attend all events or meet with every church which has a need. In other words, there are some things staff just won't be able to do. In special situations the Staff person will meet with congregations but in most cases the Staff person will connect the congregation with a trained resource person depending on the need. The following list is incomplete but is descriptive of those kinds of things Senior Staff will need to share with others who are trained to handle various needs:

1. Bringing greetings and reports to Association events.
2. Bringing greetings at induction and ordination services in the region. (Convention Council members and Associational reps could do some of these things on behalf of Convention)
3. Conflict mediation with churches in the region.
4. Connecting with and mentoring pastors and leaders.
5. Ministry Placement and meeting with search committees.
6. Assisting churches in health assessment, vision casting and missional emphasis.

“...it is our task to journey with and support pastors and churches.”

Ministry Placement will be a shared responsibility of the Associate Executive Minister with her/his administrative support staff and coaches trained to assist Search Committees. Churches seeking a pastor and pastors seeking a church would contact the office of the Associate Executive Minister responsible for Ministry Placement. (It is important to note that each of the Associate Executive Ministers will have appropriate administrative support) Unlike some denominations it is not the responsibility of the Convention to place pastors in churches. Rather, it is our task to journey with and support pastors and churches as they prayerfully work out this

relationship in the ministry. Even now there are guidelines for Search Committees available on the Convention website. Pastors seeking a Ministry Placement and churches seeking a pastor will contact the office of the Associate Executive Minister responsible for Ministry Placement to prayerfully begin this journey.

Once a church posts a ministry opening on the Convention website, it is granted access (password protected) to all resumes of Pastors wishing to relocate. There will be a great emphasis on confidentiality to protect the privacy of Pastors. The Associate Executive Minister will be responsible for phone coaching, training other coaches, and will "occasionally" meet with Search Committees as well as sometimes suggest names of potential pastors.

Ethnic Ministries

Several years ago Convention Council convened a “Racism Working Group” made up of people from the African United Baptist Association and others from across our Convention constituency to explore the issues of systemic racism in society in general, and in our Convention Churches more specifically. The RWG made us more aware of our own sad history of discrimination and our need for understanding, reconciliation, forgiveness and sensitivity training. Through our ongoing partnership with the African United Baptist Association and the French Baptist Union, we have a solid foundation to assist us in working sensitively with issues of racism, both past and present, and with the various ethnic groups in Atlantic Canada.

With this important ministry in mind a new quarter time Senior Staff position is being proposed to be, Director of Ethnic Ministries. This Staff person will work with and oversee the Ethnic Ministries Working Group and work closely with the Executive Minister and the Associate Executive Ministers in speaking to issues of racism, sensitivity training, inclusion and helping to create new ministries among various ethnic groups in Atlantic Canadian society. The following responsibilities will be part of the mandate of the Director of Ethnic Ministries and the Ethnic Ministries Working Group:

1. Continue to work for racial justice in Atlantic Canada including developing resolutions and social policies on behalf of Convention.
2. Provide resources, education and sensitivity training for the various boards, committees and agencies of the Convention.
3. Develop the partnership, participation and the full inclusion of people from the variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds present in the Atlantic Provinces within the life of the CABC.
4. Work closely with the Associate Executive Ministers to identify and develop new ministries with the variety of ethnic groups in Atlantic Canada.

“We are seeing an increasing number of people emigrating to Atlantic Canada.”

Director of Spiritual Formation/Clergy Care

The Director of Spiritual Formation/Clergy Care will be concerned with the overall health and well being of the pastors and staff of the Convention. Under the direction of the Executive Minister the Director of Spiritual Formation/Clergy Care will work closely with the Board of Ministerial Standards and Education. The primary responsibilities of the Director are to network, challenge and empower Christian pastors and leaders. The Director will be proactive in developing a plan for ongoing continuing education, spiritual formation and personal and family health for pastors. The following three responsibilities will outline the main priorities of the Director of Spiritual Formation and Clergy Care:

1. Developing Continuing Education Opportunities for Pastors

- Research and identify primary issues in leadership and pastoral skills. (In partnership with ADC)
- Partner with Acadia Divinity College & Crandall University to develop Continuing Ed opportunities for all those in the first 3-5 years of ministry.
- Provide leadership to the Board of Ministerial Standards and Education to develop new processes for journeying with those who sense a call to pastoral ministry.
- Develop a network of mature leaders willing to mentor groups of pastors in the area of leadership.

2. Holistic Spiritual Formation of pastoral leaders

- Connecting pastors to resources for Spiritual Formation.
- Engaging pastoral leaders in small peer groups for mutual formation and accountability.
- Offering training to pastors in the areas of holistic spiritual formation, soul-care, boundary setting, and healthy lifestyle.
- Educate and encourage pastors to take time for retreat, solitude and reflection.
- Provide a plan for personal growth for pastoral leaders.
- Facilitating spiritual retreats for Pastors and their families.

3. Crisis Care

- Assist in gaining access to Employee Assistance counselling services in a timely manner.
- Assess the immediate need of the pastoral family.
- Assist pastoral families in obtaining ongoing professional counselling based on the type of crisis and family need.
- Provide career counselling when needed.

“...ongoing continuing education, spiritual formation and personal and family health.”

Youth and Family

First, it must be acknowledged that the Youth and Family Department has been wonderfully creative and very successful in its ministries. Over several years the Youth and Family Department received generous funding from interested donors. In the past two years this funding ceased to be available with Convention absorbing the cost in its annual budget. Nevertheless, this arrangement is not really sustainable and therefore the Youth and Family Department will also be affected by the changes in the Senior Staff compliment. Under the new arrangement the Youth and Family Department will be reduced by one half time position. The Director of Youth and Family will decide how to implement these changes in the Youth and Family Department.

Legacy for Ministry

In addition to the Senior Staff positions being created, there is a proposal for a new staff position in charge of Legacy for Ministry. This proposal will make room for a 1/2 time position for Legacy for Ministry. This allows for a partnership with Canadian Baptist Ministries in which the Convention provides resources for ¼ time and CBM providing resources for a ¼ time for Legacy for Ministry. This partnership will allow us to hire someone in a half time position to work with our churches in the area of Estate Planning and leaving a legacy to the mission/ministry of their choice. While this staff person would not be considered Senior Staff, it is important to note that currently while the Director of Development is responsible for Legacy for Ministry this will constitute a change from our current arrangement.

Transition Concerns

This proposal represents a major paradigm shift in the manner in which Senior Staff provide leadership and support to our churches and associations. The success of this new model will depend on Senior Staff and the people in our constituency realizing we are in new, uncharted waters and we must work together to encourage one another and to empower one another to create even stronger networks of leaders throughout the Convention. Convention Council has taken seriously the need to slow down the process of change in order to allow stakeholders to understand and hopefully give consent to a vision for a new direction. Council would like to phase in the new arrangement over the next two years. This allows the four Regional Ministers who are currently at retirement age to continue in their ministries until the end of December 2011 before concluding their ministry. Starting January, 2012 we will function in “transition mode,”

“...we must work together to encourage one another and to empower one another to create even stronger networks of leaders throughout the Convention.”

for one year during which the three remaining Regional Ministers and the Director of the Atlantic Baptist Mission Board will function as a transition team and will be asked to assume greater geographical responsibility but with reduced expectations in order to provide leadership and support to the constituency in preparation for the new arrangement. Please note that during the year of transition the Regional Minister for the

African United Baptist Association will be asked to take on responsibility for churches in the wider constituency as well as the AUBA, as a result Convention is prepared to assume responsibility for all salary and expenses for the current AUBA Regional Minister. A clear set of guidelines will be given to the Regional Ministers in order to focus priorities during the year of transition. Sometime during 2012 a search process will take place so that in January 2013 the new staffing Structure will be implemented. It should be noted that current Senior Staff will be eligible to apply for any of the new positions being created.

This proposal helps us get our fiscal house in order and operate at 100% of the projected budget. Although the new staff arrangement will require fewer Senior Staff positions we will need to add administrative support to assist the Senior Staff (at least one and a half new support staff). In this new arrangement money must also be included in the budget for expenses related to training and sending volunteers to serve congregations. At current levels of giving this allows us to balance the budget and operate in the black. But, it must be emphasized that this will only work if churches remain committed to the value of giving to United In Mission. As we move forward and growth happens, it is our hope to strategically add additional Senior Staff; this is completely tied to the commitment of churches and their ongoing support of UIM.

Conclusion

As a Convention family we have arrived at one of the “hinge points” of our history, this is not a time to be discouraged. Rather, it is a time to face the future with faith and courage. This is not a time for us to mourn what we have lost; it is a time to dream about what could be. It is a time to trust God and take a risk. It is time to unite together as a committed band of Christ-followers to be a missional presence in communities across Atlantic Canada. It is time to pray and dream and work to see new ministries and new churches established in new places. It is time to pray and believe that existing churches can be renewed and revitalized. It is time to be challenged as Baptist Christians to establish fresh expressions of the church of Jesus Christ in our communities. It is time for struggling churches to join ranks with others not simply to survive but to thrive and provide a vibrant Christian witness in the community.

If we are prepared to accept a new paradigm of ministry and mission in the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches there are exciting days ahead. If we embrace a new paradigm of entrepreneurial, risk taking, spiritually transformed leadership we have the potential to see spiritual renewal and vitality impact existing churches and, to see new ministries and new congregations started throughout Atlantic Canada. As we “change the scorecard” and release greater numbers of Christians to do ministry in the community we will become more Christ-centered, focussed, compassionate and caring. Our impact for the sake of the Kingdom of God will be much greater. We have a marvellous opportunity to renew our commitment to the Priesthood of all Believers by equipping, empowering and releasing a host of volunteer Christ-followers to be his hands and feet in communities across the Atlantic Provinces.

Our goal is to strike a balance between a visionary approach to leadership while at the same time acknowledging our fiscal reality. Some may view the changes as too radical while others see them as not radical enough. Certainly patience and prayerfulness are required as we move forward into the unknown. There is a strong element of faith required in taking this step into the

“Baptists have always been people of the Book and people of faith.”

future. The Apostle Paul writes in the prologue to the epistle to the Romans that in the Gospel a righteousness is revealed from God this is by faith from first to last (Romans 1:17a). In fact he quotes the Old Testament prophet Habakuk in stating; “*The righteous will live by faith*” (Romans 1:17b NIV). Rather than be discouraged by our current situation it is time to face the future bravely with faith. Baptists have always been people of the Book and people of faith. Our history shows that courageous leaders forged new ways of impacting the world with the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In times like this we need to remind ourselves of words shared earlier in this document from the Dutch Theologian, Teun van der Leer, “*Being open to change is in our Baptist genes.*” May God help us as Christians who call themselves Baptist to positively impact the world for the sake of the Kingdom of God for generations to come.