

FORLEADERS

MDSI & FORMISSION NEWSLETTER

*Celebrating
The Path
Behind*

MAY TO DECEMBER 2021

FORLEADERS

MDSI & FORMISSION NEWSLETTER

MAY - DECEMBER 2021

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ForLeaders, a newsletter for
leaders to resource and encourage
leaders.



Our fervent prayer is that ForLeaders helps to equip, empower and inspire our leaders to fulfill their God-given callings. Deepest appreciation to MDSI and our provincial directors for their work.

*Terry W. Snow,
General Superintendent, PAONL*

ARE YOU TIRED?

By Gary Andrews

Executive Director of MDSI

Are you tired? That's probably an understated question. Here's hoping I won't tire you with what I'm about to say. This edition of ForLeaders is intended to be, in one form or other, about celebration. It's about us celebrating what God has done and is doing in church ministries across our beautiful province, in the face of a pandemic and a rapidly changing world.

But before we celebrate, let's talk about tiredness and its synonyms of weariness, exhaustion, burn out, frustration, etc. Please stay with me here.

WHY TIRED

We need to embrace the reality of the obvious. We are ALL tired of mask wearing and its related inconveniences. My wife, Roxanne, works in long-term care. Mask wearing, along with face shields have become part of her workday. It's warm, claustrophobic, and downright tiring. But it's essential.

We're also tired of mourning the loss of the pre-pandemic church life we once enjoyed. In a nutshell, we miss those things that we've had to give up for this season. And in addition to that, we've pivoted and pivoted again. Who knew that pivoting would be so tiring?

For those in Next Gen Ministries, it has been especially challenging to try and manage a room around all the physical distancing guidelines. Online engagement with youth has been just a bit challenging, understated I know! Well, I could go on. But you get the lament here. Please know that you're not alone and that we are sharing this journey together.

NOW FOR SOME CELEBRATING

So, let's come back to some celebrating in the face of and despite tiredness. Here are some reasons why we can celebrate, even as we do our very best to "not become weary in well doing".

GOD IS FAITHFUL

A book dedicated to crying, Lamentations, says these timeless words: "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (Lam 3:22-23). Fresh mercies, fresh Bread, fresh energy, fresh vision, fresh hope are guaranteed to be available to us every day. It's because of Him and Him in us that we have not given up or thrown in the towel. That is the ultimate reason to celebrate!



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN US

This season has required whole new levels of resilience, perseverance, patience, creativity, abandonment, humility, and the need to learn and do new things. Chances are, we are not the same people, the same believers, or the same leaders/pastors/volunteers that we were two years ago. We've wanted to give up and give in. We've wanted to say "no" when a desperate-sounding pastor asked if we could help. But we didn't. And for that we celebrate. Greater things are going on inside of us than around us because we are the Holy Spirit's house. He's in us, with us, for us, fighting on our side. So, let's celebrate the resilience that God creates inside of us.

WHAT'S HAPPENING THROUGH US

- Let's celebrate children's ministry connecting with parents,
- Let's celebrate more people being presented with Jesus because of online ministry
- Let's celebrate that our creativity has encouraged the creativity in others
- Let's celebrate every new salvation
- Let's celebrate online Bible study and prayer meetings
- Let's celebrate phenomenal online giving to missions
- Let's celebrate online provincial events and productions that would make TV producers take notice
- Let's celebrate weekly devotions shared all over the country
- ETC!

Are you tired? Yes. But God is not finished in us or through us. ■



**So let's not get tired
of doing what is good.
At just the right time
we will reap a harvest
of blessing if we don't
give up.**

Galatians 6:9

OVERCOMING INSECURITY

By Owen Roberts
Assistant Director of MDSI

Have you ever questioned your ability as a leader? Have you ever asked yourself these questions: Am I talented enough? Am I smart enough? Am I funny enough? Am I strong enough? I think I already know the answer. I know the answer because I've been there so many times. I don't think that we are alone on this.

I honestly think that there are moments in all our lives where we question and doubt ourselves, moments when our confidence levels are super low. How many times have I found myself in my office, asking both myself and God, am I really good enough? Am I the leader that people need me to be? What in the world am I doing here? This is a constant struggle for so many people.

One of the many things that I love about the Bible is that it's full of stories about people who struggle the same way I do. Real people with genuine problems. People who I can relate to and connect with. Let me draw your attention to a very familiar story in the Bible about one of the greatest leaders in the Old Testament. It's the story of Moses and his calling at the burning bush.

Let me quickly set the scene up for you. After Moses flees from Egypt, he finds himself in the land of Midian. At Midian, he meets his future wife, Zipporah, and eventually goes to work for his father-in-law, Jethro. One day while Moses is taking care of his father-in-law's flock deep in the wilderness near Sinai, the Lord speaks to Moses from a burning bush. From this point on we see a very honest and authentic conversation between God and Moses.

God requests of Moses that he would go back to Egypt and lead the Israelites to freedom, following God's leading. The Israelites were living a life of captivity in Egypt, and God was about to set them free, and he wanted to use Moses to accomplish that. Now, you would think that Moses would jump at this chance,

seeing that God is speaking directly to him from a bush that doesn't burn.

But here we see Moses' doubts and fears come into play; we see his humanity coming through. He first says, "how can I lead them?" Then he says, "they won't believe me." Then he points out one of his flaws, "I'm not a good speaker." Finally, he says, "can you please find someone else?" By the time the conversation is over, Moses resolves to go back to Egypt, albeit with his brother Aaron speaking for him, and eventually he leads the Israelites out of captivity.

It seems like the conversation between God and Moses was going on for quite a while. Was it ok for Moses to push back at God? Was it okay for Moses to question himself? Honestly, I think God was fine with this back and forth with Moses. It was in the back and forth that God reiterated to Moses that He would be with him through the journey. I think at the end of the day Moses needed to be constantly reminded of that fact and that's what ultimately led him to taking on this mission that God had given him.

Have you ever been in a similar situation to Moses, where you sense God calling you to do something, yet you feel inadequate? Where because of this sense of inadequacy you ask God to call someone else? Let me remind you, the same way that God reminded Moses in our story, that God will be with you in your calling. He will lead you, strengthen you and equip you to complete the task at hand! It's ok to question, it's ok to doubt, but at the end of the day we need to be willing to say yes to God, knowing that he will be with us throughout the process. Despite our inadequacies, despite our weaknesses, when we trust Him and allow Him to lead us, we can accomplish the calling that he's placed upon us. As we move forward, let's be reminded that it is God who will lead us and be with us as we continue to do ministry! ■

1 START WITH WHY

Simon Sinek

START WITH WHY shows that the leaders who've had the greatest influence in the world all think, act, and communicate the same way -- and it's the opposite of what everyone else does. Sinek calls this powerful idea *The Golden Circle*, and it provides a framework upon which organizations can be built, movements can be led, and people can be inspired. And it all starts with WHY.

2 HOW TO GROW

Darryl Dash

Join Darryl as he unpacks the gospel, shows how it applies to every area of your life, and helps you evaluate your current stage of growth so you know what steps to take next. You'll learn why habits are important, how to build them, and which ones to focus on first. Plus, you'll discover the roles that joy and desire play in our spiritual growth journey.

3 SOUL KEEPING

John Ortberg

John Ortberg will help you discover your soul--the most important connection to God there is--and find your way out of the spiritual shallow-lands to true divine depth. With characteristic insight and an accessible story-filled approach, Ortberg will help you connect more deeply with the God who gave you life and desires every day to bring more meaning and hope to that life.

4 LISTEN WELL, LEAD BETTER

Steve & Becky Harling

The Harlings share 10 practices that will help you be a more effective listener and leader. Learn how to ask better questions, make people feel heard and valued, and create an open and positive culture. Strong listeners also enjoy greater credibility, navigate conflicts better, and foster more engaged teams. Above all, the lessons here will help you hear from God more clearly.

5 CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS

Kerry Patterson et al.

When stakes are high, opinions vary, and emotions run strong, you have three choices: Avoid a crucial conversation and suffer the consequences; handle the conversation poorly and suffer the consequences; or apply the lessons and strategies of *Crucial Conversations* and improve relationships and results.

6 HOW TO PRAY

Pete Greig

How to Pray is a raw, real, and relevant look at prayer for everyone--from the committed follower of Jesus to the skeptic and the scared. Full of biblically sound wisdom, *How to Pray* will offer honest encouragement and real-life methods to refresh your spirit and help you practice life-giving and lifechanging prayer.

7 THE IDEAL TEAM PLAYER

Patrick M. Lencioni

Lencioni presents a practical framework and actionable tools for identifying, hiring, and developing ideal team players. Whether you're a leader trying to create a culture around teamwork, a staffing professional looking to hire real team players, or a team player wanting to improve yourself, this book will prove to be as useful as it is compelling.

8 EMOTIONALLY HEALTHY DISCIPLESHIP

Darryl Dash

Join Darryl as he unpacks the gospel, shows how it applies to every area of your life, and helps you evaluate your current stage of growth so you know what steps to take next. You'll learn why habits are important, how to build them, and which ones to focus on first. Plus, you'll discover the roles that joy and desire play in our spiritual growth journey.

9 THE RUTHLESS ELIMINATION OF HURRY

Commer & Ortberg

Within the pages of this book, you'll find a fascinating roadmap to staying emotionally healthy and spiritually alive in the chaos of the modern world.

OUR CURRENT READING LIST

OPEN LETTER

TO A CHURCH VOLUNTEER

By Jeremy Nippard

Director of Formission, PAONL

Hi Ministry Volunteer,

I'm writing today, first and foremost, to say thank you. Thank you for loving those you serve week after week. I'm writing this today knowing that my audience are the ones who are already all-in, serving, giving, growing, praying, and sacrificing. You don't need an admonishment to be who God has called us to be, but maybe you need a little encouragement to persevere.

So, the second thing I want to say is, I am with you. For the second time, after 13 years of pastoral ministry, I'm a volunteer in my local church too. The first time, I was working 40 hours a week at Tim Horton's while doing 4 Bible College Courses and planning a wedding. Now it is working as Formission Director while upgrading my education, learning to be an unhandy homeowner, and being a loving husband to my wife, and father to 2 precious pre-teen kids while volunteering at Spruce. I know how busy, and disruptive, and sacrificial this can get.

I get that it's tiring, and that the new regulations make everything more difficult, and that it's so hard serving when you're the 20% doing the 80% of the ministry work. I will work with my whole heart to see that change. I get that different life stages mean different levels of potential commitment and energy. I get that some weeks you don't see the fruit of your effort. I really understand that this is the most challenging time in our lifetimes to be a volunteer.

To remind you that it's worth it, here's a reminder of all the ways you changed one life:

When I was a child who knew nothing, then a young adult

who knew everything, you (Sunday school teacher and youth leader) patiently taught me who Jesus was. When I confused talent with anointing and my own preferences for the presence of God, you (worship team member) wholeheartedly, longsuffering-ly, played alongside me week after week and taught me what real worship was.

When I was spiritually adrift and far from home, and I sat in your family pew, you (board member) invited me in with rides and Sunday meals and taught me what fellowship was.

When I was a struggling student and I didn't know you from Adam, you (hospitality volunteer) saw me in the foyer and with a (sometimes monetary) handshake, you taught me what loving my neighbour was.

When I preached my first sermon for you, 5000 words in 5 minutes, you (Women's Ministries mentor) convincingly lied and told me how much you loved it, and taught me what vision was.

When I was a student volunteer, I couldn't wait to "go into the ministry." 15 years later, I think I now fully realize that I was already in ministry, and I was actually going to learn to pastor and teach and equip and model ministry alongside those who had already ministered to me.

I'm one life, transformed through the volunteers at Zion Pentecostal and elsewhere who disciplined me to Jesus. You've touched dozens, hundreds, thousands of lives. Ministry spectators don't get that blessing or (largely deferred) reward. Let's fix our eyes on it in this season, serve joyfully, and show them what they're missing. ■



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UNSHAKEABLE

By Mary Bowers

Provincial Director of Women's Ministries

“Therefore, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: ‘Look! I am placing a foundation stone in Jerusalem, a firm and tested stone. It is a precious cornerstone that is safe to build on. Whoever believes need never be shaken.’” IS. 28:16 NLT

The theme for Provincial Women’s Ministries for the year 2021 has been UNSHAKEABLE. Isaiah 28:16 from the NLT version says, “Therefore, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: ‘Look! I am placing a foundation stone in Jerusalem, a firm and tested stone. It is a precious cornerstone that is safe to build on. Whoever believes need never be shaken.’”

It’s been a difficult 18 months. No one would have ever anticipated that this is where we would be when everything started to unfold in March of 2020, but here we are. We look with anticipation to the year ahead, but no matter what the next months will bring, let’s keep our focus on God, the one who has been with us and will go with us as we step forward in the days ahead. He is the reason we can be unshakeable because we are putting our trust in God no matter what. Always know that God is not only with you, but He is for you! He desires the very best for all women, no matter your circumstance, what town you are in, or what age bracket you are, He is for you!

We are so appreciative of the many women that gathered with us both in our online Spring Conference and most recently in our fall online Women’s Conference. It was so good to join across our province of Newfoundland & Labrador in worship together. According to our stats for our September event, we had approximately 800-900 women gather at watch parties in local churches and online at home. That’s amazing! That’s worth celebrating!

At the online conference event on September 10th, we challenged our ladies to give a one-time offering with a goal of

\$10,000 to our Home Missions Fund, Change Matters. We are pleased to announce that during that one-night event, the women of the province gave \$19,186.85! To God be the glory! We are so thankful for the sacrificial giving of the women. Thank you to the women’s leadership of our local churches for challenging your women to be a part of this giving. It’s because of your leadership, we can celebrate this amazing offering. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

This Change Matters giving will enable our leadership to continue to plan and work towards bringing change in communities across our province. Let’s continue to support and promote Change Matters and our other Women’s Ministries offerings. If you need any information regarding these offerings, don’t hesitate to contact us.

As we are moving into this fall and looking towards 2022, let’s be in prayer and planning where we are. The Women’s Lead Team, consisting of Lisa Meade (Labrador City), Marion Randell (Deer Lake), Kim Foster (Springdale), Tina Mews (Embree) and myself (St. John’s) are here to encourage, partner with you and provide resources and assistance to help you to minister to the needs of the women in your area. We depend on you, the local women’s leadership, to be our feet on the ground. You are the ones that are making a difference right where you are. We are so very thankful for you and all that you are doing. Let’s continue to work together for the kingdom! ■



YOU

By Ashley Kentie

Provincial Director of Youth Ministries

“God. He was there. In the middle of all of it. How could He not be? The excitement and hype – the party – was about giving HIM space to encounter students.”

At 11PM on June 28th when my head finally hit the pillow and YB Online 2 was done I didn't have a single other thought. I went to sleep. I mean really. Like a log. A purple iridescent log. But the next day, I had all the feels. Exhausted. Excited. Overwhelmed. Relieved. I received a text that read, “You should be proud”. Friends, I was. SO proud. I was so proud of YOU. Really. Months of HARD work by a massive, creative, and committed team of people culminated in not just an online production but a province wide party of epic proportions and Kingdom impact.

For months leading into YB we connected online in conversation, stories and so much more to create a buzz about an event. What we didn't realize is that we had uncovered a way to do provincial youth ministry outside of a large event. It was like facetimeing the fam; we got to be with our crew again. We were able to offer ministry in a season of separation. (And PS that was the most life-giving experience for me as a leader who was feeling very much without a people to lead). YOU shared that stuff online like it was nobody's business. YOU showed up and interacted, modeling for students they could do it too. YOU built an energy, enthusiasm, and excitement for what was to come. YOU did that.

The night of YB Online 2, Instagram was on FIRE... I think we broke it (our hashtag wouldn't load at one point because of the spike in activity). SO many photos from students and leaders were tagged giving us a sneak peek of the incredible watch parties taking place simultaneously from coast to coast. While collectively we were mourning the loss of many spaces of celebration due to Covid19, YOU came together to create fun, warm, wild, and nostalgic spaces to laugh, connect, celebrate and be a family again. YOU did that. In the weariness of the pandemic, YOU pushed hard to give your students an experience worth talking about.

That same night our students raised \$13,190.45 for our 2021 Provincial Youth Missions project, Cambodia Connect! That is a miracle. Truly amazing. Our missions' goal for the entire year was blown out of the water at YB Online. Because leaders like YOU took pies to the face. (One committed pastor took ten pies to the face – legend). YOU passionately shared a vision, challenged students, and then gave them opportunity to show up. REALLY show up.

God. He was there. In the middle of all of it. How could He not be? The excitement and hype – the party – was about giving HIM space to encounter students. To let broken and hurting students know that the comeback is always greater than the setback. He was there in still moments of worship as we invited the Holy Spirit to rest on us. He was there in the piercing truth that while we are broken and hurting, we have been invited to a table, the table of a king whose blood flows in our veins. YOU made a space for God to do what only God could do. Thank YOU.

YB Online would NEVER have happened without YOU. This incredible team of youth pastors and youth leaders across Newfoundland and Labrador. You are leaders that love, serve, and give with everything you have because YOU believe that God is NOT finished with students and that maybe the next great move of God could begin in this generation. YOU believe in the potential of students united, on FIRE with passion and purpose, living like JESUS in their world.

As we look ahead to another season and navigate what it means to offer Provincial Youth Ministry in the lingering reality of Covid19, I am SO hopeful; I am SO excited. Because we are in this TOGETHER. US. I get to do this with YOU. Every single one of YOU. YOU and GOD. Now THAT'S a team I can get behind. ■



CELEBRATING COVID (NO, REALLY, IT'S POSSIBLE)

By Julia Ball

Provincial Director of Children's Ministries

"I have found myself in recent months, in a bit of a strange place, where I'm holding sadness and anger over this season, but also a lot of joy."

We are 18+ months into the pandemic (but let's be honest, it feels like 18 years), and I have to tell you, there are many days I find myself wishing for what we had before.

I find myself thinking back to days when we played messy, disgusting, germ-filled games, we had kids cinched shoulder-to-shoulder in our classrooms, we hugged our leaders without ever thinking twice, we cringed (but also laughed) as we watched kids put their hands into bowls of chips - knowing how many germs they (and we!) were consuming. And I miss them. I miss those moments of ministry and life as we knew it. There is so much that we have lost because of the COVID pandemic, and it's important for us to acknowledge that.

It's important for us as ministry leaders to be able to say - "I'm sad about the things we've lost over the past 18 months," or "I'm tired of having to adapt and pivot," or "I miss people because they're the whole reason I went into ministry in the first place." If you're in that place, it's okay. It's okay to be sad (and even angry!) about all we've lost in this season.

I have found myself in recent months, in a bit of a strange place, where I'm holding sadness and anger over this season, but also a lot of joy. Because as much as COVID has robbed us of, there is also much to celebrate. As a pastor to families (and the leader of children's ministry in our province!) there are two things in particular that I've seen that make me want to jump up & down in celebration:

1. We've shifted our attention from programs to people.

For so long, we have measured our success in children's ministry by the programs we run and how many children attend them. While I celebrate big and exciting children's ministries as much (or more!) than anyone, I have loved watching us shift

away from focusing on our programs to focusing on the people in them.

I have rejoiced as I've seen children's ministry leaders share about ways they've ministered to people amidst the pandemic - even when programs have been absent. Whether through a phone call to parents, a postcard sent in the mail or a porch visit, I have seen so many leaders across our province focus on people.

When the busyness of weekly programming faded away, we were able to focus on loving and ministering to the people in our programs.

I am still celebrating - because I believe as we move back into many of our programs over the next few months, we will continue to focus on the people inside of them.

2. We've moved away from being primary disciplers to partners in discipleship.

When church programs and Sunday mornings were no longer an option, we placed tools into the hands of parents to lead their kids deeper into their relationship with Jesus. This is what children's ministries have always been meant to do - but so often, our busy schedules & programs kept us from being PARTNERS.

As we move into a new season, I continue to be excited to see the ways you partner with families to disciple kids into lifelong followers of Jesus.

So, while COVID has been tough (and it still is!), there is much to celebrate! Let's keep celebrating the wins, grieving the losses, and working in God's Kingdom to grow families into vibrant disciples of Jesus. ■



CELEBRATING 2021

By Catherine Snow

Provincial Director of Prime Time Ministries

"It is a new day for aging adults. What it means 'to age' has drastically changed."

Prime Time is the place of Godly, caring connections for today's aging population. There are Pentecostal churches around our province offering solid PT ministries embedded in spiritual encouragement with relevant topics of interest and awesome activities! That is worth "CELEBRATING". These church leaders have strategically connected to the 50+ demographic in their communities and are positioning themselves to reap the benefits. In the past month, several Lead Pastors and their staff have shared how they are supporting Prime Time ministries in their churches: (1) There is the "A Team- Adults Together Engaged in Active Ministry in Lewistown"; (2) the "Adults Connecting" in Botwood; (3) the 50+ in Grand Falls Windsor-Evangel Church; (4) the 50/60+ in Bishop's Falls; (5) the 60+ ministry in Deer Lake; (6) the Prime Time Ministries in St. John's, Bethesda; and (7) "The Young At Heart" in Springdale. We know there are more churches out there like this.

It is a new day for aging adults. What it means "to age" has drastically changed. Many in the Prime Time cohort today are surfing the Internet, sharing family photos on their phones, texting, and Face timing grandkids. It is a world that has changed drastically than the one they were born into. We, too, have started a Facebook page and are committed to strengthening our own PT social media presence. There are others, who know little about technology, feel intimidated by it, but prefer to continue doing life as they are comfortable. Many of them are elderly who love the Lord, support their church, and serve however they can to be a blessing to others.

There are unlimited opportunities in the Prime Time 50+ ministry. Start praying for the right Lead Team for your church to create a welcoming environment for the Prime Timers in your

town. Government leaders are looking for groups (like churches) to share their space for social and recreational engagement to this age group. The local church is where real connections are made that last forever!

This year our provincial Prime Time planned four online services. They were: February 14th, A Valentine's Special called, "All You Need is Love" where PT adults shared personal love stories, singing, scriptures, great worship with a special presentation on solid marriage principles. On June 11-13th, we presented the June Online Retreat Weekend called, "Stay the Course" that stressed the importance of stability in God at a time when our culture is shifting. Powerful worship, excellent preaching, scripture reading, stories from retired Pioneer Pastors, special singing, Bible quizzes and amazing breakout speakers who covered a variety of topics. You can still check these out on the PAONL website.

May I conclude by giving a big Shout Out to our Prime Time team, Pastor Norman and Betty Joy and Dave and Joan Tack for their excellent contributions to this PT ministry; to Pastor Gary and the MDSI Staff for their excellent support and direction and to each Pastor and leader in the PAONL who really make it happen as you are the "boots on the ground". We do need immediate assistance in the area of our Facebook page, so if you, or someone you know can help us, please contact me at catherinesnow1@hotmail.com for further discussion. Thank you so much! God Bless us all as we celebrate and partner with each other and with God in the whole new adventure – Prime Time- It's a new day! ■



THE SPIRIT IS STILL AT WORK

By Lenora Rogers
Provincial Director of Family Ministries

"The pandemic has changed so much about the way we accomplish what God has called us to do, but it has not changed the way we are called to lead..."

From the first whispers of Covid-19, through the multiple 'lock-downs' we have experienced over the last 20 months, as leaders, families, and pastors, we have watched life and ministry do a complete 360°. Today I want to cheer you on and remind you that there is still much to celebrate. There are many leaders and pastors across our fellowship that have seized these new opportunities to engage families from within and outside church life. We need to remember that the Holy Spirit is limitless and still at work in our communities!

I love the creative and effective ministry ideas being used to engage community families and equip families within the church. Here is a small glimpse of some of this amazing ministry:

The team at Westside Tabernacle, Corner Brook has successfully served up 2 Community Family Meals this Covid season, Drive-Thru style. They blessed each vehicle with free pizza, pop and ice cream for all. What a great way to connect the church family to community families.

In the small church of Postville, Labrador the congregation and pastors, have been availing of every opportunity from cottage meetings to community events to promote healthy fellowship within the church body, families and community. Doorstep visits were made to every family in the community during the Christmas season, with a 'feed' of NL moose. They have also utilized social media with the launch of 'North Matters' and have presented God's love each week, highlighting the rich heritage of the beautiful people of the North Coast.

The Pastors and staff of our churches in Bishop Falls, Gander, Creston North, and Clarendville, have all hosted family services/events with great participation and connection with families in their communities. These churches and many others have engaged, equipped and encouraged families to participate in home centered discipleship by providing family devotionals

and highlighting participation in Sunday worship services in-person/on-line.

In my own ministry context, we have engaged families both in on-line and in-person Sunday worship and hosted family services/events, that created the comfort and space for faith conversations to continue in the home. This September we baptized 4 youth with their unchurched families in attendance. We hosted family fun challenges for church and community, and with nearly 150 doorstep visits this year, there have been organic conversations about God's love, that would not have taken place in a different season of ministry.

Last but certainly not least, The Family Ministries Provincial Team were unable to host the PK Retreat or Thrive (Pastor and Spouse enrichment weekend) in 2020 or 2021, so we focused our attention on prayer and encouragement for our pastors/leaders and their families. Kent and Jocelyn Sceviour have continued to engage our PK's and turned the production of their annual PK t-shirt into a little friendly competition. Our team is developing a user-friendly resource for leaders who want to facilitate Marriage enrichment in their ministry context, as there have been requests for practical resources in this area of Family Ministry. Darren and Elizabeth Sacrey, part of our team, will be among some of the session presenters, with a release date for late fall.

The pandemic has changed so much about the way we accomplish what God has called us to do, but it has not changed the way we are called to lead, through the creativity and power of the Holy Spirit. We need to continue to engage, equip and encourage families to ensure discipleship is alive at home, that fellowship is alive in the family of God and that the love of Jesus is alive in our communities! ■

LESSONS FROM LINCOLN

By David D. Kentie

As a civil war erupted across the United States, Abraham Lincoln found himself in a leadership quagmire. He was a strong abolitionist, but many in the southern states were not. Aside from the obvious national division, he was a Republican, and as such, he had to contend with political divisions both inside and outside his party. How did Lincoln respond to this level of national and political division? He invited his opponents to work with him.

Early in his presidency, Lincoln formed a cabinet composed of those who were ideologically different than himself. These individuals were not simply people who disagreed with his policies, no, they were vehemently opposed to them. He began by selecting former rivals, such as William H. Seward and Salmon P. Chase, granting them the prestigious positions of Secretary of State and Secretary of the Treasury. Next, he did something unthinkable, he gave several Democrats key positions like the Secretary of the Navy and the Secretary of War. All of his cabinet members were better educated, had more governing experience, and were more known than Lincoln, but this is why he brought them together. Lincoln understood that part of leadership is recognizing the strength, insight, and solutions that people can bring to a problem, even if they think differently than us. In fact, one could argue that this principal of recognizing strength in a diversity of voices is paramount to successful leadership.

As a youth pastor, it was tempting to only look for student leaders who shared common interests with me. I soon realized that this was a mistake. What I was looking for was an echo chamber when I needed student leaders who could offer criticisms of my vision. I was not God, I was not infallible; I needed the challenge to my vision in order to make calculated course corrections for the betterment of my ministry and the youth community. Further to this, those students who were different than me needed to be heard. Division is rarely healed by simply speaking over each other, it requires conflict, dialogue, and recognizing the value we all bring to a community.

Lincoln was a great president, but he was an even better leader. In the height of division, he recognized that even those who vehemently opposed him had something to bring to the table. He also understood that healing begins with inviting diversity, and from this comes a restoration of community, as well as a renewal of shared vision. It is my prayer that we all endeavour to be leaders like Lincoln. ■

