

2010 Rural Ministry Revitalization Cluster Meeting Report
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Background

After a study that encompassed nearly two years of reading and research, a perspective paper was presented to the pastors of the Northern Plains Region for their review and response. The research was comprised of reading all or parts of more than thirty books either directly related to the rural ministry or addressing issues applicable to rural ministry.

In addition, the pastors of the region were surveyed regarding their response to the perspective paper. The responses overwhelmingly indicated that the paper was a “wake-up call”, “something necessary for the long-term future of the NCA and MBA”, and “thought-provoking.” Some responses were not as affirming, but still indicated that the paper did provide a foundation for fruitful discussion of the issues. Many of the comments provided direction for how the paper was formed.

The pastors were asked to have their lay leaders read the paper and discuss it. Although a smaller percentage of leadership teams compared to the percentage of pastors did this, the discussion appears to have built upon earlier interaction promoted by the Bruce Merrifield meetings two years ago. In those meetings, Bruce presented concepts developed by Praxis Center for Church Development using concepts from *The Kingdom Quest* by Johnston and Perkinson.

The pastors were then asked to distribute a survey to each of their leaders. A report of the survey findings can be found in the accompanying Rural Ministry Leader Survey Results document. Without repeating those results in this report, it is sufficient to say that morale in our rural churches is generally low and that there is a lack of productive vision for the future. Yet, in nearly every rural church, there does appear to be one or more leaders who are hopeful and deeply desire to break out of the boundaries that exist so that they can more effectively minister in their communities.

The Cluster Meetings

Six meetings of pastors and leaders from the regional pastor/church clusters were held in February of this year. See the participation index on the next page:

Location	Churches Represented	Attended – Yes/No	Number Totals
Minitonas, MB			
	Minitonas	Yes	
	Ochre River	Yes	
	Swan River	Yes	
			28
Beausejour, MB			
	Beausejour	Yes	
	Moosehorn	No	
	Seven Sisters	Yes	
			44
Lemmon, SD			
	Hebron, ND	No	
	Isabel, SD	No	
	McIntosh, SD	Yes	
	New Leipzig, ND	Yes	
	Plevna, MT	Yes	
			16
Venturia, ND			
	Ashley, ND	Yes	
	Gackle, ND	Yes – Pastor only	
	Herreid, SD	Yes	
	Linton, ND	Yes – Pastor only	
	Medina, ND	No	
	Napoleon, ND	Yes – Pastor only	
	Venturia, ND	Yes	
	Wishek, ND	Yes	
			36
Washburn, ND			
	Beulah, ND	Yes	
	Mercer, ND	No	
	Turtle Lake, ND	Yes	
	Washburn, ND	Yes	
			16
Harvey, ND			
	Carrington, ND	Yes	
	Fessenden, ND	No	
	Harvey, ND	Yes	
	Martin, ND	Yes	
	Anamoose, ND	Yes	
	McClusky, ND	Yes	
	Goodrich, ND	Yes	
			39
		Total	151

Purpose

The purpose of the meetings was to develop some common understandings about the need and opportunities for ministry multiplication/expansion, especially concentrating on things that are being done or can be done outside church walls, creating a place for church leaders to establish connections between churches for a common vision. The hope is that these discussions will further what was done at the MBA AGM with Michael Chong Perkinson and by the Bruce Merrifield meetings two years ago, by applying the priorities of ministry when Christ commanded that we love God and others while making disciples.

Format

The meeting format was as follows:

1. A review of the results of the Rural Ministry Revitalization Study
2. Large group discussion:
 - Areas of opportunity for ministry multiplication in their sphere of influence (compute how many miles in each direction in which the church has direct influence)
 - Things that are already being done to multiply impact outside the walls of the church
3. Break Time with refreshments
4. Small groups comprised of leaders and pastors from different churches
 - Ask and answer questions of each other regarding present efforts to reach into their communities
 - Brainstorm regarding additional possibilities
 - Interact about possible partnership between churches represented and/or organizations or churches from other denominations/independents in the community
5. Presentation of tools and resources
6. Prayer in small groups.

Ideas

The following are lists of ideas that came from the discussion groups. If your church has developed one or more of these ideas, a brief description and ministry plan should be sent to the regional minister to be published on <http://npregion.org>.

Present Efforts to Make Disciples

Children

After School Children's Ministry - McClusky

Neutral location for Bible Camp (Bentley) - Anamoose

AWANA extension to another location - Drake

Drop-in Centre - "Oasis" in Minitonas, MB

Single parent mentoring

Vacation Bible School (possibly in neutral location)

Evening Vacation Bible School

Evening Children's Program - WOW (Turtle Lake), GEMs (Venturia), Faith

Transformers

Summer Puppet Ministry

Grand Prix (AWANA)

Halloween party with Christian emphasis

Elderly

Nursing Home services

Evangelism

The Lion, the Witch & the Wardrobe book study

Community Corn Feed

Adopt a Family

Ministry to reserves and reservations

Holistic small groups with outreach aspect

Jesus Video project

Pizza party and video

Visiting those who visit the church

Bible Study in Café

General

Love (city) - clean-up and project day

Coaching

Community Choir

Used Furniture Depot (Swan River, MB)

Community Food Bank

Carol Festival

Prison Ministry

Comedy & Musical events

Joint services - Holiday and/or special community events

Parade floats

Pancake Breakfast & Joint services

Invite Christian sports personalities to speak

Make a Wish Community Fund Raiser

Multiple services to reach wider range of people

Concessions at school sporting events

CD/DVD curriculum for Sunday School

Men

Bible Study

Community Softball or other sports game

Shooting event (clay pigeon, target shooting, etc)

Firewood bee

Swamp Ride

Volunteer Fire Dept.

Missions

Mexico short term missions trips

Prayer

Awana Prayer Chain

Technology

Local cable TV service broadcast

Making Praise Videos

Movie Night for Community

Women

Bible Study

Quilting Club

Book Club

Prayer Shawl Ministry - shawls to grieving widows

Used Clothing Depot (Swan River, MB)

Christian Women's Club

Ladies' Night Out

Bus Trip to Women of Faith

Youth

Community and multi-city youth groups

Specialty Camps - Ex - Wake board, Diabetic

Meet You At The Pole

Visionary Ideas to Aid in Making Disciples

Children

Child care for parents to run errands

After school "latch key" care

Mentoring Children

Step Dad Ministry for sons of single mothers

Camp Scholarships

College & Career

Summer College Bible Study

Evangelism

The Truth Project

Bible Study at the Bar

Group singing down the street

Grill and offer free meal

Easter Play

Fire-Proof Movie in Neutral Location

Elderly

Helping elderly in the name of Christ

Families

Strategize reaching AWANA & other Children's Program parents.

Develop visitation team to reach parents

Deliver Meals on Wheels and eat with them

General

Evangelism Training

Grief Counseling and Ministry(Grief Share)

Church partnership with community agencies

Home renovation/Home Repair Night

Recovering from losing partner

Special dinner preceding a community event

Sing fest at the Fair Grounds

Paint Houses

Snow Blow Driveways

Fix your car night

Christmas distribution to needy

Joining churches for picnic

Free Meal for Community

Financial Planning Workshops

Recovery Programs

Church Service Outside of Building

Hospice Support

Valentine's Day Dinner

Thanksgiving Day Feast

Cookies and Worship Service Tape to Shut-ins

Cleanup after Rodeo or other community event

Host activities at the park

Share Church Buildings in Winter

All-Community Church Picnic

Men

Tool Party

Fishing Day

Community Center Breakfast with guest speaker

Missions

Cross-Church Missions Trips

Prayer

Visit door-to-door and ask for prayer concerns

Neighborhood block prayer

Prayer Walks/Drives

Technology

Evangelistic Messages on Facebook

Women

Single Moms' Outreach

Make meals for widows and eat with them

Sponsor "Creative Memories" scrapbooking in church

Youth

Sports Banquet

Purity Training

Suma Wrestling (Campus Crusade)

Camp Scholarships

Future Meetings

Each pastor should poll his leaders to determine there is a desire to hold additional meetings for rural leaders. Forward your response to Phyl Putz – pputz@nabconf.org