

President's Assembly Report

May 1, 2025

From the Shore to New Territories

Five years ago, the Lord gave us a picture as a denomination. Like the Israelites, we found ourselves camped along the shore of the Jordan River. With an uncertain future before us, we heeded His instructions (paraphrase), "Since you have never been this way before, consecrate yourselves – purify and prepare yourselves, and only move out when you see me move. In the days ahead, I will do amazing things among you." In those moments, the Spirit of God placed a compass in our hands - four compass directives to guide our movement toward our vision: to make disciples who make disciples, invest in leaders who develop other leaders and encourage churches and disciple-makers to multiply new churches and communities of followers of Jesus on mission to the world.

*By Assembly 2025, looking back, we will have prepared the way organizationally and operationally to be **future-ready** to better serve our current EMCC leaders (pastors, global workers and global partners) and EMCC churches and started to open the door to support future leaders and future expressions of the church.*

*By Assembly 2025, looking back, we will have grown in **Christ-like character** marked by holy living and mutual accountability.*

*By Assembly 2025, looking back, we will have experienced greater levels of collegiality and **engagement** in our life together as an EMCC family, leading to greater collective impact.*

Over the past four years, we have taken steps to prepare ourselves for the future at both the denominational and congregational levels. We have refreshed and updated our structures, systems, and policies to align with our purposes and to sustain and guide us into the future. Additionally, we have worked to enhance reporting and accountability, as shown by the fact that 95% of our credential holders submit their annual reports on time. We have humbly sought to genuinely address cases of historical abuse and proactively respond to allegations of concern. We are continually learning to be like Jesus in our attitudes, behaviour and character. To this point, we have engaged with 76 out of 106 member churches in a concerted effort to strengthen our bonds and renew our covenant relationship. We plan to engage with the remainder of our member church boards in 2025. Our interactions have sparked awareness, church-to-church reconnections, understanding, forgiveness, and prayer and helped clarify expectations.

To read powerful stories about what our EMCC members, churches, global workers and National Team have been doing, download the EMCC Together Magazine here: https://www.emcc.ca/files/emccadmin/2025_EMCCTogether_digitalweb.pdf or from our website www.emcc.ca.

At Assembly 2025, we launch into our fourth compass point - multiplication.

*By Assembly 2027, looking back, we will have strengthened our reflexes toward **multiplication by 2027**. We expect to count more disciples, as disciples multiply disciples; more leaders, as leaders multiply leaders; and more churches, as churches multiply new churches and disciple-making communities.*

EMCC Initiatives

To that end, we have launched the following two-year initiatives, which have received the National Board's wholehearted endorsement and funding.

Multiplication Initiative (M³)

M³ represents our collective intention to multiply disciples, leaders and churches. In this case, more is better because it means more transformations, more potential released and more churches and communities of followers of Jesus on mission to the world.

Multiplication flows out of prayer to the Lord of the Harvest. Our current Season of Prayer (March 21-April 30) calls our EMCC family to concerted prayer. For details and resources, www.emcc.ca.

This initiative invites us to transform our minds from focusing on division, subtraction, and even addition to multiplication. It calls us to move beyond survival and maintenance - from hold-on-to mode to dream mode. At Assembly 2025, we will ask the Spirit of God to help us dream again. Disciples, leaders and churches are the fruit of people obediently pursuing a dream from God to start something and invest in someone.

To stimulate our multiplication reflex, we have opened a Multiplication Grant Fund that will allow us to bless new initiatives – to water new seeds. We seek a Multiplication Initiative Coordinator to help stimulate and resource our dreams and multiplication efforts. We will learn from others who have multiplication mindsets and actions. We know there is much to learn from our global partners.

Growing Younger Initiative

This initiative aims to help pastors and church leadership teams create lasting culture changes in their congregations that help foster meaningful engagement with the next generation (under 25).

This two-year initiative leverages a partnership with Fuller Youth Institute to provide training and resources to churches for growing young. This initiative does not diminish our need to disciple and support our members of all ages. In our work with emerging generations, those under 25 are leaving the church in alarming numbers. Hiring a youth pastor is not enough. Pastors are overwhelmed by the needs of their existing members and often feel ill-equipped to make the necessary cultural shifts to engage younger generations effectively. This is not just a pastor issue but a whole church issue. Few individuals under 25 are being invited, stepping into, or being mentored into leadership positions within the church. As a denomination focused on the future, our priority must be to engage with younger generations to preserve and grow the legacy of our faith. Despite challenging times, there is an opportunity and a growing desire from the next generation to know more about Jesus and be a vital part of the church.

To grow younger, we have developed a two-year strategy to work with 10 pilot EMCC churches, raising trainers to impact more churches. We desire to include those under 25 in our conversations, plans, and equipping. We have appointed a Growing Young Initiative Coordinator, Genevieve Epp, who is forming a volunteer team to lead the way and by example. At Assembly 2025, we will launch a Growing Young survey to gather baseline data on how we currently engage young people under 25.

Resonant Conversations Initiative

Ultimately, every community has to learn how to talk together. We are created as conversational beings created to live most fully in community in conversation.

Conversation can be difficult amid diverse opinions and convictions. Fight. Flight. Check out. Lean in. By learning to talk together, be present to one another, be self-aware of our reactions and follow the guidance of Christ's presence with us in the Holy Spirit, we mature into the full stature of Christ (Eph 4:13) and witness our world.

Within our denominational family, we hold differing convictions on many matters. Differences often lead to division, but they don't have to. Over our history, we can point to conversations that became heated and led to hurt rather than mutual understanding and unity of purpose and mission while respecting differences. We dream of being a family that talks well together – that doesn't jump from distrust to defence without first offering our ears, hearts, minds and intent to understand – that has resonant conversations. A resonant conversation is one where there is resonance – a harmony of mutual respect, mutual awareness and mutual learning.

This two-year initiative aims to foster a learner-centred culture within our denomination, enabling us to engage in constructive conversations. The goal is to learn how to understand, collaborate with, minister to, and grow from those with differing convictions. (Note: There is no agenda to change our Articles of Faith; instead, the goal is to learn how to talk better together.)

Our Conversation Facilitation Team, established in 2022, has created an

interactive four-part learning cohort experience to enhance our awareness of how we communicate in conversations. A pilot cohort was conducted in 2024, with participants reporting notable growth in self-awareness and understanding. In 2025, we will offer three additional cohorts. The goal is to train individuals who will, in turn, provide this essential training annually, enabling all our credential holders and church leaders to engage in more effective conversations during our denominational meetings and discussions with members and individuals from our congregations. A part-time Resonant Conversation Initiative Coordinator, Ruth Esau (interim), has been appointed to assemble a volunteer team of facilitators, refine the learning experience, and facilitate the cohorts.

EMCC Research Projects

Denominational Funding Research

In a proactive effort to be future-ready, the EMCC National Board contracted a research consultant to conduct in-depth research to inform EMCC of options for a financially sustainable future. Between February 5 and March 15, 2024, Karen Kirkwood from OrgHealth conducted one-on-one interviews with representatives from eight similar Canadian Christian-based denominations to learn about their funding models, successes, and challenges. A representative sample (32) of EMCC member churches were surveyed to know what services they value and their approach and understanding of giving to EMCC. The results of this research were presented to the National Board and then to participants at our Regional Gatherings in 2024.

The following key themes emerged from the research and subsequent discussion:

- EMCC is a lean organization that does much with what is given.
- Member churches value EMCC's leadership and services yet often do not know all that is provided or available.
- EMCC relies primarily on member church contributions as a sole source of revenue, which is not a sustainable model. "Over 90% of EMCC's revenue currently comes from member churches compared to 65% for other similar denominations.
- Lessons learned from other funding models included adding standard cost recovery fees and strengthening investment opportunities.

The following two steps are being taken toward our financial sustainability:

The National Board and National Team have been on an "Engagement Tour" to increase awareness of EMCC services and the covenant relationship between the member church and the denomination, which includes giving to the EMCC.

The National Board has directed the National Team to establish standard cost recovery fees.

Effective September 1, 2025, there will be a new church application fee for those looking to become member churches.

Effective January 1, 2026, there will be a standard annual base member church contribution fee of \$2500.00. This fee is covered by all churches that contribute 5% or more than \$2500. The fee will primarily apply to member churches that do not give to EMCC annually or have not spoken to us about their financial situation.

Effective September 1, 2025, all credential applicants will pay a \$150.00 standard application fee. This fee does not apply to those moving from EMCC Provisional License to Licenced Minister to Ordained Minister. The church or organization recommending or hiring the credential holder may choose to pay the fee on behalf of the candidate.

Effective at Annual Reporting in 2026, all credential holders (except those retired) must pay a standard annual fee of \$250.00. Those currently with MOUs with Other Ministries will be folded into this plan. Fees will be submitted as part of the credential holder's annual reporting. Churches and organizations may pay the fee on behalf of the credential holder, but the credential holder is responsible for ensuring it is paid.

Mission Sending Research

To uphold our commitment to sending global workers and mobilizing followers of Jesus on mission, the National Board has contracted the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) Centre for Ministry Partners and Innovation Project Team to conduct thorough research into sustainable sending models. Following a similar approach to the funding research project, EMCC missions stakeholders will be interviewed, a representative group of member churches will be surveyed, and interviews will be conducted with external denominations and mission organizations. This research project aims to identify sending models the EMCC may adopt as it moves forward. The goal is to present a report to the National Board in late 2025 and discuss the findings at our Regional Gatherings in 2026.