

March 2005, *Equipping*



Becoming a productive ministry

Statements by two business leaders recently caught my attention. The first is from Peter Drucker, author and business guru, who said that to know if any company is successful there are only two questions that need to be asked. These are: “What business are you in?” and “How is business?”

The second is from Carson Pue, who also writes on business leadership from a Christian perspective. He writes that “With the exception of navigating through a crisis, the first task of any leader is to make the current business (or ministry) work. If that doesn’t happen, there will not likely be an organization for you to lead. The second task we have as leaders is to reinvent the business. To get these two activities reversed is to court disaster.”¹

The vision of these leaders also help us focus the purpose of the national church body (you will recall the discussion about this at last summer’s Assembly) as we transition from one fiscal year (ending January 31) to final budget adjustments for the year we have just entered. These are important orienting comments. At the Leadership Assembly, March 3-5, the General Board, Christian Witness Council, Christian Formation Council, Support Services Council and the Moderators, Secretaries and Conference Ministers (of MC Canada and the area conferences) will be meeting to evaluate and plan, to refine our shared understanding of what business we are in, how we’re doing, and how to make it work better.

I wonder how our member area conferences and constituent congregations work at these leadership issues.

- Do members know and agree on what business the church is in?
- How is business?
- Is it working?
- Does it need to be reinvented?

Congregations may define their business as “bringing people to a deeper commitment of faith in Jesus Christ,” or “sharing the gospel in our community.” They may say their business is “participation in God’s work of bringing healing and hope to people,” or perhaps “engaging in mission around the world (or in a particular country or region).” Area conferences may be in the business of helping congregations to be successful in their endeavors.

In the church, we often don’t answer the question of how we are doing, and whether our business is working. From the Garden of Eden (“Be fruitful and multiply...” Genesis 1:28) through the teaching of Jesus (“This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit...” John 15:8) the scriptures declare that God wants us to be productive with the resources that have been entrusted to us. Drucker, Pue and others challenge me to evaluate how well we are doing with that trust.

¹ Pue’s free electronic newsletter is available from www.arrowleadership.org/res/.