



MAY 5, 2017

FIELD REPORT FROM NCM CANADA:
THE VIEW FROM HERE

Please enjoy the following field report from Rev. Elaine Bumstead, Executive Director of NCM Canada:

Hi Everyone,

I am enjoying lovely, sunny weather here in Malawi, in the seventies Fahrenheit. I understand it is cold and rainy at home. Made the right decision to travel to Malawi at this time, ha ha!

Great trip so far. Uneventful, except for having a strap break on a sandal and having my one lens in my sunglasses pop out. I was able to fix the sunglasses and I have other sandals with me. Those are just small things. Interesting, though, how small things can become significant when you are travelling – away from home and tools and shops and the usual amenities we are used to. Let me illustrate...

I realize that as Canadians we eat a very large variety of foods. In South Asia, every meal and every dish is curry. Here in Malawi, it is chicken and chips, or if you want variety, you can have chips and chicken! Here, where I am staying, the cook is supposed to ask me what I want tonight for dinner. Not sure what is the point of asking??

Two days ago I was surprised – I was offered the choice of chicken or beef stew. Well, of course I chose beef stew. I was hungry so I asked also for two slices of bread or 2 buns with the beef stew. I got a very puzzled look. When I made the shape of a bun the cook shook his head. So I said, ***“Bread is fine.”*** Later, the cook sent his helper to ask me again, ***“Two slices of bread with beef stew?”*** Then when it was supposed to be ready, the cook asked me again, ***“Two slices of bread with beef stew?”*** He made a motion like breaking bread and I said, ***“No, not in the stew. I would like the bread on the side with butter.”*** Then the NCM Malawi Coordinator who had joined me at the table recognized there was a problem and he explained what it meant to have bread as a

side order. I did get stew with two slices of bread on a separate plate with butter. The stew was also served on a saucer and was less than ¼ inch deep on the saucer. I did not ask for the moon, I was thinking!! But by that time I was so tired I didn't care, and was thankful for some sustenance.

Yesterday I ordered my breakfast the night before, as we were leaving to visit projects early in the morning. There is no coffee. Apparently people don't drink coffee here, and have little idea what it is. I was promised "milky tea" instead. So I said, "*Okay.*" The next morning my breakfast came on a tray. Most of it was as ordered, but there was no tea. Part way through the breakfast, the cook's helper ran to me with a mug on a tray and I thought, "*Oh good! Here comes my milky tea.*" But when I looked inside, the cup was empty! Not even a teabag in it! The helper had left as quickly as he came. I didn't have the time to pursue him. I was already late getting on the road.

So you see, small things become big when you are travelling! And it is so easy to create misunderstandings. I find that, in general, people want very much to please their guests, but because of cultural and contextual differences, even little things become challenges!

Yesterday I had a whirlwind tour of 7 different project sites in the Nsange district. I listened to speeches by 4 different chiefs, a politician, a government agriculture worker, seven different pastors, a District Superintendent, one NCM Project Manager and the list goes on. After the speeches, I was able to meet with some beneficiaries to talk with them and ask questions through an interpreter. That was the most interesting part. The beneficiaries all expressed gratitude for the food they received: corn (which they call maize), beans, oil, and corn soy blend (CSB). The women explained how they cooked the CSB as a porridge for breakfast for themselves and their young children. They boiled some water and added the CSB slowly while stirring. Then added some oil and cooked it until thick. It was intended as a nutritional supplement for pregnant and nursing mothers and for children under 5 years of age, so we wanted to know how they used it.

The corn was taken to a mill and milled to make coarse flour from which they make Nsima (not sure of spelling), which is a thick corn flour porridge (with little taste). It is served as a main dish with some cooked beans (like black beans). That is a typical meal in the villages. Poor people eat very little meat or foods from other food groups. The beans (legumes) we provided are a source of protein.

The beneficiaries explained what it was like for them before the food aid came to them – how they suffered from hunger and how their younger children cried and they did not have enough milk to give them (those who were nursed). Older children were too tired and weak to go to school. One lady demonstrated how her skirt became so loose, she had to tie it to keep it on. They described how they went to the river and found some roots of water plants. Normally these are poisonous, but if you boil and boil them and keep changing the water as you cook them, they become edible. They also said that anytime a village hut (house) had smoke coming from it, they knew someone had something to cook. The children would go and play near that house, hoping to get a bit of the cooked food.

When the people learned that the church was providing food, they literally rejoiced. They danced with their children! One lady demonstrated the dance. They couldn't believe this was happening to them! They were so thankful.

We also wanted to know from them what life is like now, after the final distribution of food. All said that they are very disappointed. The reason they are disappointed is that they are again hungry. The rains did not come at the expected time when they planted their "gardens" (small plots of land), and when it came, it rained so hard that it washed away the maize (corn) seedlings. They replanted, and there was some rain (for germination), and then the rain stopped. The seedlings were stressed and the army worms came and ate the plants that survived.

"I worked and worked. I go now to my garden and come away with nothing."

They showed us their gardens where the leaves of the maize and even the stalks are infested with army worms. No cobs means no Nsima. No food.

In other parts of Malawi, the harvest is excellent and there is plenty of food. But in this particular area, there is no maize harvest. Some other vegetables are growing, but not the maize.

The food we distributed was to last until harvest. Now we have to decide whether to continue to provide some food (maybe a part ration) or give vouchers to buy food in the market or do a development project with them such as conservation agriculture and/or income generating activities. Or a combination of these. Or none of the above. We need to analyze the seriousness of the situation, find out what other organizations are doing (others who also provided food in this area), find out what the church here recommends, and make a decision.

It is hard to look into the faces of young mothers with babies on their backs and think of what life is like for them without food.

All for now,

Elaine



NEW BOOK RELEASED!
FLOURISHING CONGREGATIONS IN CANADA

Greetings on behalf of the Flourishing Congregations Institute at Ambrose University in Calgary, Alberta!

Some of you participated in our phase one interview and focus group research last spring/summer, several were instrumental to network us with church leaders across the country, and others have graciously followed and supported us from a distance. Thank you for your interest as we seek to better understand flourishing congregations in a distinctly Canadian context, mindful of variations along Christian traditions and Canadian regions.

As we enter our second year as an Institute we highlight some of last year's activities, feature some upcoming initiatives, and make you aware of resources that may be useful in your local contexts.

Thanks to generous funding and partnerships with – Ambrose University, Cardus, Christian and Missionary Alliance Canadian West District, Christian and Missionary Alliance Canadian Midwest District, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Turning Point Consulting, University of Saskatchewan, Willow Creek Canada, and World Vision Canada – we embarked on over one hundred interviews and focus groups with church leaders across five Canadian regions.

Key research findings on the Canadian context for congregational life as well as preliminary insights on dimensions of a flourishing congregation have already been presented at academic conferences, plus various invited presentations to faculty, church, and denominational leader groups. Some of these findings are available on the resources tab on our [website](#).

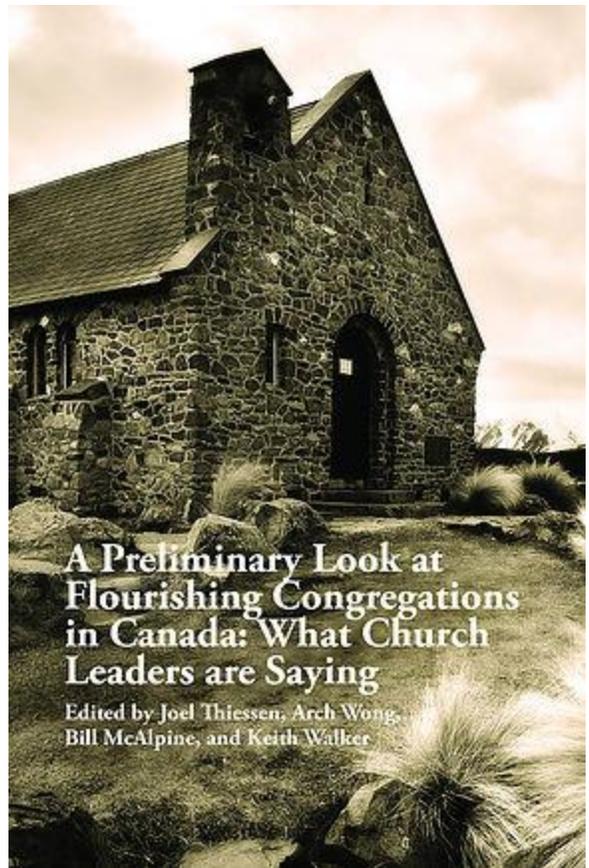
We are excited to announce the release of a monograph titled, "A Preliminary Look at Flourishing Congregations in Canada: What Church Leaders are Saying," based on our phase one interviews and focus groups. This book is available for purchase via [this link](#), or can be downloaded for free on our website by mid-May. In short, this book is an attempt to document the central findings and presentations from our Launch in November 2016, plus a series of blogs written for our website over the past year.

Looking ahead we are working on several articles to emerge from our initial data collection, plus we are setting the stage for a national survey, detailed case studies, additional interviews and focus groups, and various public and national events that bring together academics and practitioners with an interest in congregations in Canada. Among other objectives, we intend to generate empirically-based and theologically informed tools and resources that benefit churches and denominations toward flourishing.

We welcome the opportunity to partner with and serve congregations and denominations across Canada – let us know if you have suggestions or ideas that would be helpful for you. Also, we invite you to check out our [website](#), track with us by signing up for regular updates and resources, and stay connected via [twitter](#) and [facebook](#).

Sincerely,

Joel Thiessen, Ph.D.
Professor of Sociology, [Ambrose University](#)
Director, Flourishing Congregations Institute



CANADIAN FRIENDS AND ALUMNI BREAKFAST **AT GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Join Canadian friends and Ambrose University (NUC, CNC) alumni on June 24 at the 2017 Nazarene General Assembly for a special breakfast, co-sponsored by the Church of the Nazarene Canada and Ambrose University.

Learn how the Church of the Nazarene Canada and Ambrose University are partnering together to equip the next generation of Nazarene leaders and strengthen our churches.

Indiana Convention Centre

Saturday, June 24, 2017 | 8:00 AM–9:30 AM

Tickets \$65.00 | Available online at www.eventbrite.ca

Schedule

8:00 AM – Prayer and Welcome with [Terry Fach](#), Chaplain at Ambrose University

8:10 AM – Fellowship over Breakfast

8:35 AM – National Board Update with [K. Clair MacMillan](#), National Director of Church of the Nazarene Canada

8:40 AM – Learning at Ambrose with Mo Hickman, Church Ministry Student and Winner of the 2015 Ambrose University Presidential Scholarship

8:50 AM – Ambrose Video Update with Helen Thiessen, NYI Field Youth Coordinator (Canada) and Director of Enrolment at Ambrose University

8:55 AM – Research at Ambrose with [Joel Thiessen](#), Associate Professor of Sociology and Director of the [Flourishing Congregations Institute](#) at Ambrose University

9:15 AM – Greetings and Reflections from [Riley Coulter](#), Director of Stewardship Ministries at Church of the Nazarene Canada (and Chancellor of Ambrose University from 2008–2011)

9:25 AM – Closing Remarks with [Terry Fach](#), Chaplain at Ambrose University

This schedule is subject to change – visit the Alumni page at [ambrose.edu](#) or contact the Alumni Office (alumni@ambrose.edu) for up-to-date information.

THE DYNAMIC TRIO

The Dynamic Trio, the most recent publication of Dr. William Stewart, is now available!

At the most hopeless and discouraging time of her life, Allison meets a group of new friends who have started studying the three primary Christian qualities of hope, faith, and love. As Allison begins to absorb the meaning, power, and truth of this “Dynamic Trio,” she is introduced to new ideas, principles, and purposes that will change her life. With the help of her new friends, she applies hope, faith, and love to her own situation and is transformed from a lost and defeated person into someone with purpose, meaning, and fulfillment.

As you join Allison in her journey, you may come to a fresh understanding of these three qualities and begin to enrich and renew your own spiritual journey.

You can purchase your copy of The Dynamic Trio from the National Office for \$20.00 (includes shipping charges).

**Send your news items of national interest to Diane at national@nazarene.ca
and see your information appear in the next edition of**

Nazarene News