

Survey Results – “Assessing Current and Future Ministry Needs”

The second survey, “Assessing Current and Future Ministry Needs”, was available online on October 14th and was scheduled to end on November 14th. Due to a lower than expected response rate, the deadline was extended until December 1st. The goal of this survey was to receive feedback from pastors, church leaders and association leadership regarding the current status of the CABC and what types of ministries are needed as we consider our pastors and churches.

In total, 937 emails notifications were sent out along with five requests for copies of the survey to be sent out by regular mail. By Dec. 1st, 232 people had responded (including 4 responses by mail). The response rate was approximately 25%. By statistical analysis standards, this comes close to an acceptable response rate of 30% but does not quite meet that goal. One possible reason for the lower response is that the two surveys were sent out close together, possibly causing confusion for some pastors who may not have realized that these were two distinct surveys. In any case, there is still much valid information and feedback the respondents offered that we need to consider.

In total, 78 % respondents identified themselves as pastors or lay pastors; 19% identified themselves church leaders and 16% indicated that they serve as association leaders (respondents were permitted to choose more than one option).

Here are a few important results to note:

- **Question 3: “How many individuals from your church(es) attended Oasis 2009 as delegates”:**
 - o **21% of the churches represented in the responses did not have any representation at Oasis 2009.**

- *Question 4: “How many individuals from your church(es) attended Oasis 2009 who were NOT delegates”:*
 - o *32% of the churches represented in the responses had people other than delegates attend Oasis 2009.*

- **Question 7: “Thinking about who the CABC is, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements...”:**
 - o **96.5% see value in being a part of the CABC**
 - o **69.7% have a good understanding of the CABC. The flip side to this is that 30.3% do not feel they have a good understanding of the CABC.**
 - o **28% believe that being a member of the CABC has not significantly enhanced the effectiveness of the church’s ministry.**

- Question 8: “Which of these terms most accurately describes your church/organization's level of connection with the CABC...”:
 - o There is a strong majority (about 96%) that feel connected at varying levels and only 4% that do not feel connected at all.

- Some other interesting comments centered around the Associations:
 - o **“Review efficacy of association structure. Eats up huge resources for what appears to be very little return. Instead, engage local churches in a policy governance structure that optimizes their direct input, strengthens their 'buy-in', and significantly shortens the decision timelines from the current models.”**
 - o **“Invest in our Associations.”**
 - o **“Associations need to be reformed based on ministry efforts rather than another platform for personalities, power and politics.”**
 - o **“Get rid of Associations.”**

Answers and comments to questions 11 to 15 offer some key information that is helpful in evaluating where we are and where we may need to focus some resources.

Question 11 – “Thinking about the services and resources currently offered by the CABC, which ones would you as an INDIVIDUAL miss if they were not there?” Below is a list of the CABC departments and the results submitted by respondents. [Note: The columns of “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” were added together as was “Disagree” and “Strongly Disagree” to come to the totals below.]

Departments	Agree	Disagree	N/A
Atlantic Baptist Mission Board	78.1	15.5	6.4
Communications	83.2	12.7	4.1
Convention Council	60.2	28.7	11.1
Youth & Family Department	76.4	15.6	8.0
Oasis	81.1	14.3	4.5
Operations	72.3	17.4	10.3
Regional Ministry	73.9	21.4	4.6
Development	62.5	26.8	10.6
Public Witness & Social Concerns	69.4	23.6	6.9

Here is a selection of comments:

- o **“All necessary - perhaps an emphasis placed on Pastor - Spouse - Family assistance in spiritual retreats or vacation assistance, etc. I know for myself we have no cottage or family members with a cottage and lack of funds presently to rent a place for the summer vacation time - it would be great if there were places available around the Atlantic Region at low cost or grants available for financial assistance. We live right**

"on site" at our church and we need to get away from here if we can have any sanity at all during a vacation break."

- *"About Regional Ministry - I feel something and someone needs to perform the function of Pastor to Pastors, and Mediator between Pastors and churches which Regional Ministry is meant to provide. Regional Ministry could be changed in ways that would make it much more helpful to churches and pastors, or it could be dissolved, and a new, better thought-out provision made for these needs."*
- ***"I strongly feel the operations of the CABC are strongly misunderstood. I feel a vast majority would have to step out of their comfort zone to attend Oasis, but would benefit greatly by attending."***
- *"I have observed & experienced the importance of all these resources."*

Regional Ministry was commented on frequently throughout the survey and particularly throughout questions 11 to 15. Since the comments covered a wide range, we thought it would be useful to informally survey the comments. While it is difficult to definitively categorize all of the comments, many of them fell into these categories:

- Positive (*leave RM in its current structure*): **7**
- Needs change(*recognition of stress on RM; look at changing RM roles, adding executive assistants*): **28**
- Negative (*eliminate RM*): **4**

Here are a few comments:

- ***"That administrative duties be handled by assistants to allow the Directors of ministries and the Executive Minister to be free from office procedures and spend this valuable time in our churches on a regular basis."***
- *"I think there is sometimes too much work placed on regional ministers - I cannot express how much they have meant to me and to the church. These ministers are on the front lines helping churches. I wish there were more of them."*
- ***"More support for Regional Ministers for churches, when things are going well, so that there would be more contact with churches at all times, not just when there is a problem. Perhaps an assistant to Regional Ministers."***

Question #14 gave the respondents an opportunity to offer suggestions for changes (if any) in staffing structure and ministry priorities. Here are a few comments:

- ***"A department for care of the pastor and family.
A separation of duties of care for pastors and ministry placement.
More emphasis on evangelism, church health and church planting.
More departments and less regional work."***

- *“Someone appointed to be a Spiritual Advisor for Pastors/Spouses for the entire Convention. I realize that this might fall under requirements placed on Regional Ministers, but this might need someone's sole attention to assist both pastors and churches face this important need.”*
- ***“I believe that regional or a convention professional counsellor(s) should be brought on staff to co-ordinate first level counselling in our convention's local churches and to deliver professional counselling to pastors, lead staff/workers, and their families. We have overlooked this aspect of ministry for far too long.”***

Although the question was not asked, comments were also given about the need for a pastoral care department:

- ***“Clergy Care, ie.... body, mind, spirit esp. the Wounded Healer Syndrome!!!!!!”***
- *“Address the needs of pastoral care and pastor health in a changing social climate.”*
- ***“I believe that regional or a convention professional counsellor(s) should be brought on staff to co-ordinate first level counselling in our convention's local churches and to deliver professional counselling to pastors, lead staff/workers, and their families. We have overlooked this aspect of ministry for far too long.”***

Along a similar line, some offered some thoughts about retreats for Pastors:

- ***“Pastoral support. I feel the more support convention could provide for pastors could help them in many ways.”***
- *“Annual Pastor / Spouses Retreat”*
- ***“Ministry - Myself as Lay Pastor could use a little support: (a) Workshops, Materials as DVD, on Church Ministries etc; (b) Speakers dropping in from time to time; (c) Maybe offer some studies on line to upgrade.
I don't know what would be the answer to helping Pastors, maybe a good retreat for them and their spouses.”***

There is much here for consideration and discussion as we move ahead. The raw data is also available online (www.baptist-atlantic.ca/departments/executiveminister). We encourage you to browse the results and, if you wish to comment on any trends you note, please send your remarks to Dr. Peter Reid – email (peter.reid@baptist-atlantic.ca) or mail (1655 Manawagonish Rd., Saint John, NB E2M 3Y2). Watch in the near future for an opportunity to be involved in a focus group in your area.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mr. Andrew Myers, Communications Manager
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