

OUR PURPOSE
To glorify God by partnering
together in obedience to
the Great Commandment
and the Great Commission

OUR VISION
To be a movement of
healthy reproducing
churches



1st Annual Conference of the Christian Workers' Churches of Canada, Hamilton, ONT. Nov. 16 to 19, 1922

A Legacy of Blessing - 100 Years

Our theme for the Associated Gospel Churches' centennial year celebration is "**A Legacy of Blessing - 100 Years.**" As we reflect on those early pastors, ministry leaders, and congregations that courageously stood for the Gospel in a time of theological drift, we are encouraged to meet the challenges of ministry today. Much has changed in Canada in the past 100 years, but what has not changed is our vision to **be a movement of healthy reproducing churches** which partner together to reach the lost and establish new and vibrant congregations that serve as a living witness to the transformational power of the Gospel.

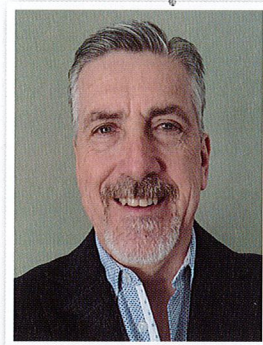
George Santayana, a Spanish-American philosopher, essayist, and poet, is considered the originator of the saying, "*Those who cannot remember the past are doomed to repeat it.*" While written from a negative point of view—when society fails to learn from horrific events—I think there is another perspective for this quote. When we forget the past, we fail to see how God has been at work in our midst. God worked through the early AGC pioneers to uphold the authority of the Word in a shifting culture. When we remember those

pioneers, we are challenged to move forward with the message of the Gospel to those still without hope.

The writer to the Hebrews gives us a tremendous challenge in Hebrews 12:1-2, "*Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*"

I pray that this year's edition of CONNECT will challenge and encourage us to remember the past so that we do repeat the faithfulness of the AGC pioneers in all our ministry activity!

Dr. Bill Allan — AGC President



"Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him." (James 1:12)

Our Journey with AGC: A Blessing of Belonging

When **Grace of God Christian Church of Calgary** (G2C3) started in Calgary in March 2015, it was not easy. While I had some experience planting a small church in the Philippines, doing so in Canada came with a new set of challenges. As an independent church, we often felt alone navigating everything by ourselves.

However, everything changed when G2C3 was inducted into the AGC on **February 11, 2018**. It was a turning point—we were no longer alone. As a church of immigrants, we deeply needed the support, accountability, and encouragement that comes from being part of a larger body. Finding the right association was crucial, and when we learned about the AGC's commitment to the authority of Scripture and its mission, the decision was clear.

Over the last seven years, our journey with AGC has been marked by three key blessings:

1. **We Belong** – We are now part of a nationwide family of churches that loves God and His people. The sense of belonging has strengthened us.
2. **We Are Encouraged** – AGC has provided spiritual and pastoral encouragement, equipping us to seek God and serve faithfully.
3. **We Are Led** – Through the AGC's leadership and resources, we have grown from being independent to interdependent, walking alongside others in ministry.

Being part of AGC reminds us that we are not alone in this mission. We are grateful for the support, friendships, and guidance that help us carry on in ministry with faith and perseverance.

Rev. Gerrad Fortalezza, Pastor at Grace of God Christian Church – Calgary, AB.



“Therefore encourage one another and build one another up,
just as you are doing.” 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Don't Wait, Lean In

A large part of pastoral ministry is showing believers the incredible resources we have available to us because of our new identity in Christ. Whether it is the riches of His grace, adoption into His family, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, or the greatness of His resurrected power; we have so much available to us as believers! Yet, we can still forget or ignore all that we have available to us in Christ.

To a much lesser extent, this is a parallel description of my experience as a pastor in the AGC. At one of our more recent AGC Area Pastor gatherings, many in our group were surprised to find the practical help available for churches under the “Members” tab on the AGC website (email Head Office for the password). There were responses like, “Who knew?” and “This is great!” That epiphany struck me.

In the weekly grind of shepherding, it can be tempting for me to lose sight of the incredible resources available because of our identity as a part of the AGC family. When my focus becomes so local, annual conferences remind me that I'm a part of something much bigger. When my soul becomes lonely, gathering as area pastors encourages me through the prayers and sharing of co-labourers. And when my heart is heavy from leading, experienced shepherds like AGC West Regional Director Rob Cochrane, apply wisdom and grace to my situation.

I feel like I need to make a disclaimer like, “I am not being paid by President Bill Allan to say these things.” But I am encouraged by the grace God gives us as we serve alongside one another. Don't wait. Lean in and click on that “Members” tab.

Rev. Jeremy Koleba, Pastor at Church of the Open Bible – Ponoka, AB.



Welcome to the AGC Family!

It was a joy to **welcome** two new congregations
into the AGC family of churches!



Off Lake Church, Emo ON

led by Pastor Sheldon Savage. Given their location in north-west Ontario, near the Manitoba border, we have placed them in our AGC West region.



Lighthouse TORONTO CHURCH

Lighthouse Church Toronto, Markham ON

led by Pastor Woohyun is a largely Korean congregation -
형제자매 여러분, 환영합니다.
(welcome brothers and sisters!)

Appreciation & Encouragement

My first introduction to the AGC was through an invitation by Bud Penner to consider joining the leadership team. I first declined the invitation because Lois and I were called to be missionaries and had been doing that ministry for twenty-four years. Bud was persistent and eventually we felt we should consider this as a call away from missions and a fresh call to re-enter the world of pastoral ministry.

Decades in mission had allowed us to plant churches and see churches mature and reproduce. The AGC's clear vision, "A Movement of Healthy Reproducing Churches," was an aspirational vision that I could easily embrace as it fit with our missionary vision of expanding the Kingdom of God as first priority.

During the fifteen years in AGC leadership I was pleased to see that the association had the faith and insight to embrace change even when that change was potentially painful. The vision and insight never changed even as we brought in new structures of governance, a condensed statement of faith, and refreshed by-laws. As challenges presented themselves, I saw the AGC across Canada come together to adopt and adapt.

Lastly, what I have appreciated most about the AGC is the quality and longevity of our pastors, elders, and particularly the staff across the country. The earthly strength of the AGC is the godly people that make up the constituents of our association.

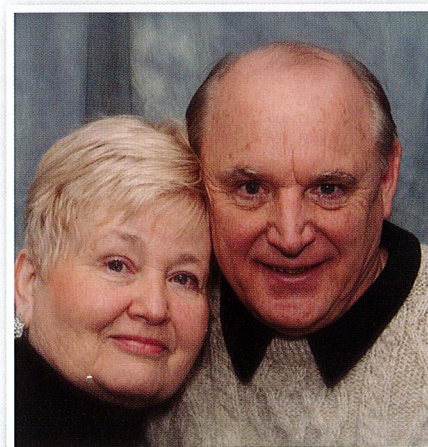
What gives me encouragement for the future of the AGC is much of what I said above: The godly faith and leadership of our people that, if dedicated and boldly persistent, with the power of the Holy Spirit, will continue well

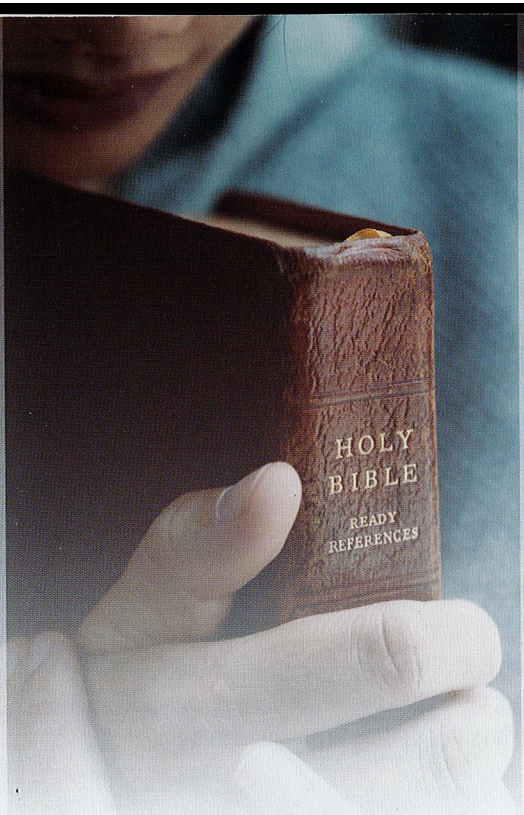
into the future no matter what.

The AGC began by adhering to the Fundamentals of the Faith (1925), and over these past one hundred years has remained preaching the glorious gospel of Jesus without fail. Regardless of the location or the size of the congregations, every AGC church relies on and preaches the truth of the Holy Spirit breathed Scriptures. With God all things are possible and that is what makes me encouraged for the future of the AGC and all Bible believing churches.

Rev. Dr. Willem (Bill) Fietje, Along with Lois, Willem served many years as a missionary in Thailand and then in leadership with OMF in Canada.

Bill served as the AGC East Regional Superintendent (2003-2008) and then as AGC President (2008-2018). Lois was recently called home to be with Jesus after a brief battle with cancer. — Cambridge ON.





Uncool, Countercultural, and Relentlessly Biblical!

As I reflect on fourteen years of pastoral ministry in the AGC, I am thankful for how the Lord providentially led me to this community of like-minded churches. After experiencing a radical theological shift and leaving my theologically liberal denomination behind, I felt spiritually homeless and was unsure of where to go next. But through another pastor who I happened to be sitting next to at a continuing education class, I heard about the AGC, and after a little exploring, knew this would be a good fit. Surprising to many, what set the AGC apart, and ultimately convinced me to start the compatibility process was this: the website was awful and there was an explicit statement on biblical complementarianism! This was a good sign that I had finally found an association that did not care about being cool or bucking cultural trends. While many churches are obsessed with image, trying but failing to be hip, and are more interested in appearing culturally savvy than retaining unpopular biblical teaching, the AGC has remained firm in its theological convictions, for which I am thankful. This is why I came into the AGC as a young pastor, looking for a Christian community with real convictions, and this is why I have stayed in the AGC all these years. Talking to young men aspiring to be pastor-teachers, this is also what they are looking for today. In an ever-changing faddish culture, ever-changing faddish churches are not appealing, which is why I can point them towards the AGC. My encouragement to our leaders is that you continue to lead with conviction, "holding fast to the faith once for all delivered to the saints", and unashamed of what makes the AGC unique. Uncool. Countercultural. Relentlessly biblical.

Jay Hinds, Lead Pastor at Church of the Open Bible – Swift Current, SK.

"The Bible is the greatest of all books; to study it the noblest of all pursuits; to understand it, the highest of all goals."

~ Charles Caldwell Ryrie ~

Part of the Family

I started pastoring in the AGC after 19 years with the Baptist Fellowship. Although apprehensive about serving in a new association, I was amazed by how warmly I was welcomed and even invited to serve on the Church Health and Leadership Commission. It was clear to me I was part of a special movement of loving and godly pastors and leaders.

As part of the AGC leadership team, I gained a unique perspective into the heart of the association. First, I was impressed with the caliber of the leaders—people filled with a deep love for the Lord and His Church along with a high degree of skill, wisdom, and insight into God's will for His people. I also appreciated the humility that characterized many pastors and leaders, who were more interested in promoting others rather than themselves.

In the 17 years I have been with the AGC, pastoral care has clearly been a priority. The AGC has invested in me by supporting, encouraging and equipping me, which has led to significant growth and effectiveness as a shepherd and leader in my church. I pray these rich qualities and priorities will continue to define us in the future.

Rev. Peter Kenniphaas, Lead Pastor at Ferndale Bible Church – Peterborough, ON.

"If we stop learning today, we stop teaching tomorrow."

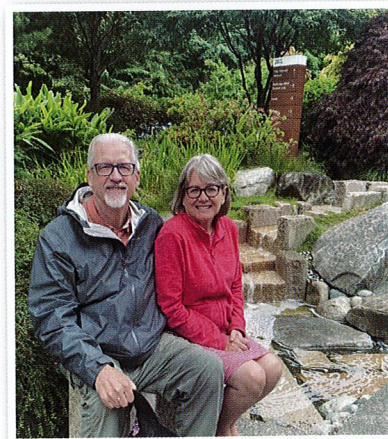
~ Howard G. Hendricks ~

How God Has Blessed Us Through the AGC

By the railroad track that borders the Siksika reserve, in a tiny old church, local Christians gather on Sundays to sing, pray, and encourage one another. They talk about new calves, pianos and grandchildren, they hear the Bible preached and help those who live around them. In an A-frame building dwarfed by the mountains looming over it, faithful believers welcome visitors from around the world each Sunday to worship and hear God's Word, and during the week offer a food bank and Bible studies. In an older NE Calgary church, Filipino saints—in Canada for only a few years—seek out new arrivals inviting them to worship the Lord, hear the Scriptures taught, and enjoy some food together on Sundays. During the week they work, encourage those who are working on visa applications, help those moving into new apartments, and provide online and home Bible studies for newcomers.

In places like this, with the people of God, we've experienced His rich blessing as we served Him in the AGC. We pastored two Calgary churches, travelled through western Canada for 12 years as District Superintendent, served as an interim pastor, and now serve through supply preaching. The AGC didn't begin in the west until 1940, but since then God has blessed its commitment to biblical faithfulness, and to strengthening church leaders and congregations. In this part of Canada, where vast distances and isolation shape and challenge the work of the Lord, the long-term ministry of the AGC has been instrumental in strengthening and unifying faithful pastors, Christians and local churches in the ongoing work of the gospel.

Jim & Carolyn Houston, Jim was first ordained in the AGC in 1987. – Calgary, AB.



Blessed by the AGC

The AGC's vision is "to be a movement of healthy, reproducing churches." But back in the early 2000's the AGC church in Woodstock, Ontario (named, The Rock Bible Church, formerly, The Rock Community Church, and prior to that, Berean Bible Church), a once thriving disciple-making community, was struggling to survive. Other local churches in Woodstock had reached out to AGC national office personnel wondering if they could purchase the church's property and building.

AGC personnel arranged several meetings with a small remnant, assisted in the formation of a leadership team, helped to identify pastoral leadership, and provided the necessary financial support for a "restart" initiative. Eventually, Rev. Dr. Adam Brown agreed to leave the pastoral team at Philpott Memorial Church (AGC) in Hamilton and come to Woodstock with a committed emphasis on biblical preaching and teaching. Retired AGC pastors, Wayne Foster and Lew Worrada, also offered crucial direction, support, and encouragement from their years of ministry experience. As a result, the momentum began to shift. Interest grew and others became engaged in what God was wanting to accomplish in and through this AGC restart initiative.

A foundation was laid in those early days that we continue to benefit from and build upon to this very day. The Rock Bible Church eventually became self-supporting, repaid its financial debt to the AGC, and has since become mortgage free. We believe that The Rock Bible Church exists to make disciples of Jesus Christ. And we are here today, in the city of Woodstock, because of our association with a group of churches who share a vision to become a movement of healthy, reproducing churches.

"Thank you" Associated Gospel Churches!



Dr. George Boyd, Vocational Elder at the Rock Bible Church and sits on the AGC National Board.

Previously, George served in several pastoral roles, and as the AGC East Regional Superintendent (2008-2013) – Woodstock, ON.

Better Together

It is natural for Pastors to be asked: "What kind of church is your church?" Sometimes this is a loaded question that is really asking, "Are you some kind of weird lone-ranger church with extreme views? In other words, are you healthy?" That's when I smile and say, "Our church is part of a big, coast to coast movement of healthy reproducing churches." It's good to be able to say that!

The AGC is blessed to have strong leadership at the top, solid doctrine, and good values that rub off on us all. When we are wrestling with doctrinal matters, we can ask ourselves, "Does the AGC have a position on this?" We are living in times when everything is on the table. **We are stronger together.**

The Lord has called us to a mega mission: "Go and make disciples of all the nations". Whenever we gather in our AGC meetings, **we are more inspired together.** We retell the stories of what God has done among us for the last 100 years and dream of what can still be done together. **We can do more together than alone.**

My wife and I have been with Peoples Church of Montreal and the AGC for 10 years. Hanging out with AGC leaders and other pastors gives me a feeling of being happier together. I always leave our gatherings happier. We share resources and sometimes we also share the hard stuff—heavy burdens and frustrations. We all need someone to talk with when we feel overwhelmed. Inside we say, "They are carrying on—I can to." Talking to someone on the outside helps us on the inside. **We are more courageous together.**

Let's be real, we are living through the craziest of times with lots to keep us awake at night. Yet, the AGC continues to move ahead, to lead, to guide, and to support. Peoples Church of Montreal is presently going through a process of restructuring our governance model and it is at the AGC we have looked for help. It is a long process, but we look at other AGC churches that have done it. **We are a wee bit wiser together.**

It's better together!

Rev. Ken Godon, Pastor at Peoples Church Montreal, sits on the AGC National Board and is the Québec Regional Council Chair – Montreal QC.

"The world has changed
and it's going to keep
changing, but God never
changes; so we are safe
when we cling to Him."

~ Charles R. Swindoll ~

This is OUR Family!

Have you ever wondered what the word *family* (/ˈfam(ɪ)li/) truly means? Family is an incredible gift, a *unit*—a group that supports, loves, and creates an atmosphere of safety. The AGC is a family, a *unit*. And honestly, one of the best families to be a part of. WHY? I'm so glad you asked!

The AGC family, which I've been a part of for 37 years, has poured into my life and into the life of Calvary Church's ministries in countless ways. The AGC has supported us spiritually, doctrinally, and financially. Over the years, the AGC (think of them as our parent) has nurtured and helped us grow into a healthy church and motivated us to create a disciple-making strategy that works.

When you think of family, you think of people who have your back—people who walk through life with you and help you develop. The AGC family fosters churches that impact the world, both yesterday, today, and into the future. Is it perfect? Not by a long shot. But the AGC has always strived to be that parent who loves with transparency, authenticity, and genuineness. But here's what we, as ministry leaders, need to do: we need to step into that relationship with excitement and passion, eager to learn and grow from one another.

Personally, the AGC has helped me grow and mature as a leader, offering me countless opportunities through Regional teams, National teams, and even in our MLGs. The AGC has coached and supported me in the ministry God has called me to. I am incredibly grateful for the AGC's investment in me and the resources they've provided to help me be part of a family that's passionate about seeing Jesus' Kingdom come.

The AGC has been, and will always be, to me, a family UNIT that empowers ministry leaders to be the people God created and called them to be, all for the glory of God and the advancement of His Kingdom here on earth.

Rev. Craig Danielson, Lead Pastor at Calvary Church, and serves with the Niagara Regional Police Services (Volunteer) as an Honorary Inspector Chaplain – St. Catharines ON.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God." (Colossians 3:16)

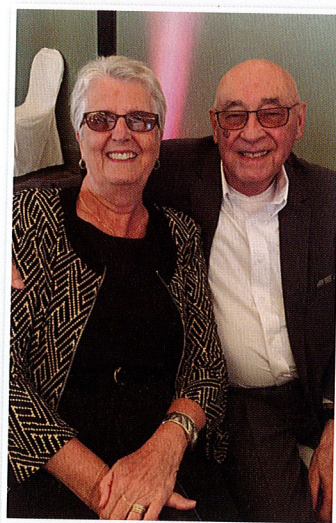
From the Farm to the Pulpit – From the Pulpit to the President's Desk

I grew up on a remote farm in Saskatchewan. I was not a church-going person, and once I came to faith in Christ as a teenager, I greatly appreciated interacting with folk. In Bible College, one of my favourite teachers suggested I pursue becoming a Pastor. I did not like public speaking, BUT, somehow through discipline, practice, coaching, and a great deal of dependence on the Holy Spirit, I served in public speaking for 60 years.

During my time as a student Pastor, I was attracted to the AGC through relationships and a well-articulated statement of faith. After pastoring two churches in Ontario, we felt drawn back to Western Canada to plant churches in Calgary and the surrounding area. This was the highlight of our ministry life! In every setting, we focused on relational discipleship, leadership training, and community connections. The support of the AGC family made it possible for us to see three churches started in Calgary, Canmore, and Red Deer.

I believe that the AGC continues to have a strong place not just in Canada but also beyond our borders as a support and training Association for local churches. May we continue to support churches reaching their communities, and where needed, support churches in planting new churches.

Rev. Bud Penner, Ordained with the AGC in 1967, and has served as a Pastor, Church Planter, Western Region Superintendent, and AGC President (2000-2008). He and Beulah reside in Beamsville ON. and they attend Calvary Church – Beamsville ON.



"Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task." (1 Timothy 3:1)



Visit our website @
agcofcanada.com

Find out more about:

- Our AGC Staff
- AGC Doctrine & Statement of Faith

- AGC History
- Locate an AGC Church
- Upcoming events & much more ...

