

Measurements Committee Report to Gathering 2010

July 16, 2010, Langley, BC

In response to critiques of the Key Cities Initiative and delegate response at Gathering 2008, the executive board has instituted a measurements committee, and assigned them the task of providing ongoing evaluation of the Regenerate 21-01 (R 21-01) initiatives based on feedback from denominational/provincial staff and churches. The award-winning measurement strategy designed by Rich Janzen includes the following components:

1. Focus group interviews with Winnipeg office and field staff- 2 focus groups completed
2. Interviews with provincial conference staff leaders- 6 phone interviews completed
3. Tracking of initiative participation- ongoing (see Table 1 below)
4. Internet survey of MB church leaders- 1st survey completed
5. Survey at Gatherings

Detailed reports from the focus groups, interviews, and internet survey were presented to the executive board, a summary of which is presented below. We are early in the process, and many are still learning about the Regenerate 21-01 initiatives. All evaluative components are ongoing, with summative report due in 2013.

Table 1 presents the proposed and actual usage of the various R 21-01 initiatives to date.

	Actual 2008 to Gathering 2010	Proposed 2008 to Present
Refocusing		
# of MB churches	25	30
Other groups (non-MB churches, networks, MB organizations, etc.)	9	32
Leadership development		
Arrow scholarships	0	17
Entering Leadership Initiative	4	40
Ministry Advantage/Other leadership initiatives	41	0
LTMG Students	25	
Young Leaders Events	2	
Reaching Out		
Church Planting Apprenticeships	3	4
Church Planting Director Apprenticeship	1	
Church Planting Major Events	2	
Extension Director Cohort Meetings	3	
Horizon Quebec - Partnerships	5	
Horizon Quebec Missionaries	2	
Horizon Quebec Leadership Development Apprentice	1	
New church plants	14 plus 2 satellite churches	
Stewardship presentations		
Seminars and sermons	79	n/a
Eagle's Flight Presentations	71	n/a
Other stewardship initiatives (1-on-1 counseling, small groups, etc.)	124	n/a

Focus groups

The two focus groups have involved a combined total of 14 Winnipeg staff. Common themes in these interviews included:

- There are some positive effects for staff personally, including renewed energy and stronger faith for some. Stories from the churches have encouraged staff.
- There is lack of clarity about how R 21-01 fits with the recent restructuring and the job descriptions of individual staff. “What is the connection between what I do and R 21-01?” Some feel “invisible” as they were not part of planning and do not see how their tasks are an integral part of R 21-01.
- There is a desire for more or better communication from the leadership to the staff as R 21-01 unfolds. Some of this is related to greater clarity about the purpose and implementation of the different initiatives, and some is related to the need for ongoing communication as R 21-01 changes and is fine tuned (old versions of R 21-01 still circulate).
- Some are unclear on how R 21-01 compares to what they were doing before in the “6 strategic service areas” and how it fits into the MB theological framework. Certain aspects of this framework (i.e.: social justice) appear to be absent.

Interviews

A provincial conference leader from each of the six provinces was interviewed. At the time of these interviews (Nov 09-Feb 10), some provincial leaders were still figuring out how to implement R 21-01 initiatives in their provinces, particularly in working out R 21-01’s relationship with provincial initiatives. R 21-01 has been rolled out longer and in heavier dosages in the Western provinces (BC particularly), and less so as one moves east (weak in Ontario). The amount of interaction between provincial and national staff seemed to be a key factor. Some key findings:

- Provincial leaders were positive about the sound theory of R 21-01, bringing all major national programs under one unified effort. They were also positive about the efforts of national staff to support them, and to work collaboratively to incorporate R 21-01 into provincial initiatives.
- Provincial leaders were also positive about higher collaboration between leaders across the country, increased resources for outreach, leadership development and church health. Leaders were able to point to specific positive outcomes of R 21-01 initiatives for their churches (although they were not always sure what could be directly attributed to R 21-01).
- They felt there was a lack of clear communication about the programs, and that the churches did not really understand them. They recommended less fancy presentation and more clear content on the benefits of different initiatives for the churches.

- Another concern was that (weak) relationships between national and provincial staff and churches limited the successful implementation of R21-01 (a problem that originated long before R 21-01). A sense of “territorialism”, a lack of clarity on how to implement R 21-01 in their (a church’s or province’s) unique situation, the lack of input from the provinces in the creation of R21-01, and some resistance because of negative experiences related to KCI, were all seen as impediments to stronger national-provincial-church collaboration. To remove these relational impediments, provincial staff recommended more input from the provinces in shaping initiatives, more clarity on roles and accountabilities, and avoiding duplication with provincial initiatives.

Internet Survey

About 100 church leaders (about 40% of churches, almost 2/3rds were lead pastors) responded to the internet survey in April/May 2010, which means we may have disproportionately missed those churches that are less responsive to the denomination and/or less interested in R 21-01. However, there was a good sampling of churches from all the provinces.

- Informedness – Pastors were most informed about Refocusing, and least informed about Outreach initiatives. Attending denominational/provincial events (like Gathering) is the strongest predictor of being informed about R 21-01. In general, respondents felt their churches knew little about R 21-01. It may be that denominational events is where they get the information, or it may be that people who are informed are also those who are more likely to attend events, because they have a closer relationship with the denomination.
- Participation – Those who participated or intended to participate were more likely to be well- informed (which, in turn, is related to attending denominational/provincial events). Of those who had not yet participated, many respondents were open to participate but few intended to participate at the time of the survey. Those who participated are more likely to be near a denominational centre (in BC and MB) and are less likely to be in Ontario and the Maritimes.
- Respondents who had been involved in certain R 21-01 initiatives were positive about them, particularly Refocusing and Eagle’s Flight.
- Respondents resonate with the Evangelical-Anabaptist identity more strongly than with R21-01. Predictably, there is a strong correlation between a commitment to R 21-01 and being informed about and participating in R 21-01.

Overall, there are positive evaluations—particularly of Refocusing and Eagle’s Flight—for those who have been involved in it. These seem to be related to the staff involved in these initiatives. However, it appears that there is a breakdown in communication/informedness between 1) the denomination and congregational leader/respondent and between 2) the leader and the congregation. Church leaders are not well-informed (many say they know “something” about R 21-01 initiatives) and the congregations they serve are even less informed. It may not be that the amount of information is lacking, but that what they have read/seen is not piquing their interest nor is it encouraging them to participate. The data indicate the problem is worse the further we get from the denominational centres in BC and MB (particularly in Ontario and the Maritimes). The level of commitment to Regenerate 21-01 initiatives indicate that there is a lack of buy-in to denominational initiatives in some sectors. Overall, significant numbers of MB

leaders and their congregations are yet to be convinced of the usefulness of Regenerate 21-01 initiatives to their specific context.

Respectfully submitted,
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