

Annual Report - September 2025

CABF Credentials Committee

The Credentials Committee continues to be a hub of connectivity for our clergy and the churches they serve. In recent years, we have worked to ensure there is at least one member of the committee from each Province where CABF is officially recognized as a religious body for the purpose of officiating marriages.

Speaking of... that list continues to grow! In August of this year, we received word that our application to be recognized in Saskatchewan has been approved. Each process has a unique set of criteria. Most of our applications include about 100 pages of collected documents and engagement with member churches in the province (in Saskatchewan, Emmanuel Baptist provided 100 signatures on a petition). Of course, the larger work of CABF and the governance committee to update our official documents have also been crucial to this effort. It is important to remember, we cannot apply to a province unless we have at least one member church in that province. When we cross the finish line, it is always a celebration—mostly because it means we can more fully support our credentialed clergy and member churches. Here is a brief history of CABF's recognition:

2012 - Nova Scotia

2022 - Alberta

2023 - British Columbia

2025 - Saskatchewan

In the past year we have welcomed five new clergy to our list. Most new clergy to CABF come through transfer of credentials. That process includes an application, personal statements, references, verification of education and credentials, and an interview with our committee. In the last year, we have welcomed three new clergy through this process (one in BC, two in AB). Our Committee also partnered with FBC Halifax in a historic ordination process, leading last year to the ordinations of Rev. Luke Dowding and Rev. Andrea King, both from the UK. What a joy it was to welcome friends from across Canada and the United Kingdom to the ordination service at FBC Halifax, with a Nova Scotia Kitchen Party following (yes, Baptists can dance!).

A study of the list of credentialed clergy is an interesting indicator of our Association at this time in our shared life. Here is a summary of our ordained clergy.

Nova Scotia (9 active, 2 member churches served, 6 retired):

Serving Member Churches: 3 (representing 2 churches)

Chaplain: 4

Professor: 1

Other: 1

Retired: 6

Alberta (6 active, 1 member church served, 1 retired):

Serving Member Churches: 1

Chaplain: 3

Other: 2

Retired:1

British Columbia (2 active, 2 member churches served):

Serving Member Churches: 2 (representing 2 churches)

Saskatchewan (1 active, 1 member church served):

Serving Member Churches: 1

**By the time this report is voted on, we could have one additional credentialed clergy who is currently in the final stages of our process, representing a second member church.

Now... isn't this interesting? When you count a candidate in process in SK, this means we have as many member churches served by CABF clergy in BC and SK as we do NS. Overall, we have more actively serving clergy working outside NS than we do within NS. This is a significant shift—it is wise for the Association to understand this as it is a strong indicator of where our future is heading. While a church can join CABF without its clergy seeking credentialing, I do think calling a CABF credentialed clergy is a clear signifier that we are a church's primary home and the Association they look to for partnership and support in their work.

I'm going to take the privilege as chair to be a bit more personal in this report...

Investment is being made in building a true community among CABF clergy serving our member churches and our chaplains serving in a variety of ministry settings. As a minister at one of the founding churches of CABF, I can testify that my cross-Canada clergy colleagues are a gift from God. In my early years at FBC Halifax, I was worried about this... who were my Baptist colleagues in Canada? Would CABF be able to continue to provide the kind of support clergy need?

Ministry can be lonely, having friends and colleagues to regularly share life with is vital—we cannot underestimate the power of this. In 2019, Luke Dowding, then a deacon at Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church in London, UK, challenged me over a cup of coffee in London—find other affirming Baptists in Canada, there must be more. Months later, Ryan Sato reached out and, well, the fallout from that first conversation continues to bring life to a growing network of Baptist clergy and churches across Canada who look to CABF as their primary denominational home! Praise be to the Spirit who has a knack for surprising us and interrupting our assumptions...

From monthly zoom meetings to our annual CABF Cross-Canada gathering, relationships are growing among clergy serving our member churches. This is good both for our clergy and for the member churches they serve. What I can testify to is that we have a brilliant, creative, and hopeful community of clergy within our network. They are fully aware of the challenges of being church in this time, yet also fueled by hope. We are learning from each other. We think about ways that our churches can connect in meaningful formation and service. We share ideas and resources. All that to say, I hope CABF will carve out space not only to continue supporting our clergy, but to listen and learn from them as they serve our member churches. I believe our future as CABF will be shaped by the energy emerging from this growing community. That is one of the trends among healthy Baptist denominations, at the centre of their vitality are networks of engaged clergy who partner with lay leadership to imagine and implement the calling of the church in our time and places.

Friends, I hope you join me in celebrating the work of the Credentials Committee. I am so grateful for all that is happening.

Journeying Together,
Rusty Edwards
Chair, CABF Credentials Committee