

February 2005, *Equipping*

Week of Prayer – Celebration 2005



January 18-25 is designated in the ecumenical churches as a “Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.” Many of our churches will be participating in ecumenical worship services and otherwise recognizing the relationship in Christ that crosses denominational boundaries. We encourage this.

The Week of Prayer is being facilitated by the Canadian Council of Churches, of which we are a member. We are also affiliated with the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, which promotes functional cooperation between its members in other ways. One of those initiatives is a plan called “Celebration 2005,” which will draw together the strength of participating churches across the country in witnessing to our common faith.

“*Celebration 2005*” has three stages:

1. Your church decides what activity best suits your own community and local fellowship. Maybe that's a community service, a picnic, a drama, a festival or something else. By everyone scheduling the activities for **May 21 - June 12, 2005**, a chain reaction of God's love can be set off across the country.
2. Your church joins a national "Party" at a location in the community of your choosing, linked live via satellite on **June 12 of 2005**. You can celebrate on your own or with other congregations in your area what God has done amongst you locally and in our nation. By gathering we are making a statement to the world that God is at work in Canada, our province, city, community and in our church! Jesus is alive!
3. Your church leaders gather with those of the other local participating churches one more time (**later in June**) to share what they have learned, discuss which of their initiatives were most effective and plan what would be most beneficial for them to do next. *Celebration 2005* is not an "event" but an opportunity to discover new resources, try new ideas, make new partnerships and strengthen existing networks that will enrich the church for years to come.”

To explore ways for your congregation to get involved, check the web site: www.celebration2005.ca.

I hope you as leaders and also your congregation will use these and other opportunities to reflect on how you relate to other Christian churches in your community. When we discussed the resolution to join the Canadian Council of Churches and Evangelical Fellowship of Canada last summer we said we want to “join with other Christian churches to speak with a unified Christian voice (especially from our perspective of peace and reconciliation) and to do together what is better done together.” Let’s put this into action where we live.

—*Dan Nighswander, general secretary, Menonite Church Canada*