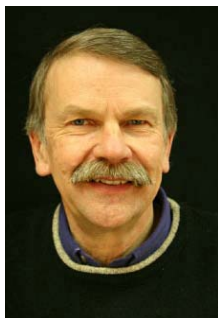


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Practicing Resurrection

If all churches that call Jesus “Lord” would be taken and tossed into a big pot over high heat and rendered down to their defining components, with detracting impurities boiled off, what would you get? Would this purification process result in something that looked like the church in the book of Acts? And to what extent would we of Mennonite Church Canada find ourselves favourably aligned with that first vigorous mother-church of us all?

This first church was centered on the risen Christ, lived in unity and celebrated great hope for the future.

The charter members of the Christian Church had no developed body of theology to work from concerning their new faith; nor did they enjoy deep cultural or ethnic bonds. They were a motley crew from a variety of religious, ideological and ethnic backgrounds. The New Testament epistles later reveal some of the differences that existed among them.

They were brought together by the resurrection. Their life together and their sense of the future were so centered on the resurrection of Jesus that all else was secondary. Before his resurrection, they had been scattered in defeat and despair. Then the presence of Christ among them had confirmed his words and promises; and they were filled with new life.

The focus of their life had become Jesus. Their confession was “Jesus Christ is Lord.” As a result of their common confession, they experienced a unity that defied their diversity. None of their differences were big enough to divide them. “They met constantly to hear the apostles teach and to share the common life, to break bread and to pray ...all whose faith had drawn them together held everything in common...” (Acts 2:42-44, NEB)

They “practiced resurrection” (words coined by Wendell Berry).

Easter calls. It is a call to practice resurrection: to claim together our confession: “Jesus Christ is Lord;” to embrace the unity that our confession gives us; then to embrace the future together with eager anticipation of what the risen Christ will do in us and among us and through us.

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