



**Mennonite
Church
Canada**

Witness

Multi-cultural Ministry Newsletter

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Working towards integration of people groups within Mennonite congregations and cooperation among people of different ethnic, social, national, political and religious backgrounds.

FROM THE DIRECTOR



From July to September I was away from home for 49 days! I thank God for blessings and guidance during all these times visiting different cities and countries. Here are some highlights of my diverse itinerary.

North American Vietnamese Mennonite Fellowship Bi-annual Conference (July 4-6)

This conference in Souderton, PA used the theme: LOOKING FORWARD TO THE FUTURE (Jeremiah 29:11). I give thanks and glory to God for the growth of Vietnamese churches in the United States and Canada. Words cannot express my appreciation for the efforts and energy these sisters and brothers have committed to God's ministry. It is my hope that with the help of God, they will continue to work ceaselessly towards expanding and strengthening the work.

MC Canada Annual Assembly (July 9-13)

The Annual Assembly this year was held at Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario. The theme was "What if...Love..." The Office of Multi-cultural Ministry gave a presentation. Over ten brothers and sisters, from different language groups, shared experiences in their different ministry areas. I received some very encouraging feedback. I am sure it has helped in promoting further understanding and insight into the works and ministries of diverse ethnic groups in various areas.

Mennonite World Conference (MWC) (August 11-17)

MWC was held in Bulawayo, the second largest city in Zimbabwe. I had the opportunity to meet and fellowship with people who came from different countries. Dr. David Shenk, who was for some 18 years a missionary to Somalia with Eastern Mennonite Mission, an Islamic Scholar and the former Overseas Missions Director of EMM, said this in his letter: "To witness the African church hosting the world-wide Mennonite/Brethren in Christ fellowship of churches was a blessing beyond description." All Brethren in Christ women

in Zimbabwe wear white hats for worship. We often chose the bleachers, just for the joy of seeing these thousands of white covered heads scattered throughout the assembly - and the singing - it was a grand preparation for heaven.

One of the highlights of the journey was a vacation visit to Victoria Falls. David Livingston, the great missionary to Africa, upon first seeing these world-famous falls, wrote: "on sights as beautiful as this, angels in their flight must have gazed."

For more of my interesting encounters and thoughts on the MWC please read the Multi-cultural supplement in the November 17 issue of *Canadian Mennonite*.

MC Canada Missional Church Training, MC Canada Staff Retreat and Witness Staff Meeting (September 7-12)

These events all took place in the same week in Winnipeg and the scenic surroundings of Pinawa, MB. I found it refreshing and even relaxing (despite all the meetings) after being constantly on the road during my month of summer travels. I gained fresh inspirations and insights as well as renewed strength both spiritually and physically.

Multi-cultural Leadership Training (September 13)

This training program, which first started with MCEC in the spring, came to MC Manitoba in Winnipeg this September, with Maurice Martin as instructor. It was well attended by representatives from various language groups, including Laotian, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Spanish speaking people.

It is our hope that this training can be extended to other area conferences so that ethnic groups in those areas can also benefit from this very helpful, well-designed and systematic course.

MCBC Multi-cultural Leaders Lunch Meeting with Dan Nighswander (October 17)

Dan Nighswander, General Secretary of Mennonite Church Canada, visited B.C. in the second week of October. I arranged a meeting for leaders of diverse ethnic groups to meet with him and share their thoughts and concerns on various issues. It was very helpful in promoting mutual understanding of issues from different perspectives.

Multi-cultural Ministry Supplement in *Canadian Mennonite*

The second of two issues of Multi-cultural Ministry Supplement will be published on November 17. A heartfelt thank-you to all those brothers and sisters and churches that provided information. Please take time to read and enjoy this joint effort by a number of very busy brothers and sisters. Your feedback and comments are most appreciated.

People & Events

- We thank God for leading Joseph Huen, Pastor of **Peace Chinese Mennonite Church, Richmond BC**, to attend a two-week study in Jerusalem, Israel from the end of October to early November 2003.
- We also continue to remember Magdalena Widjaja, Pastor of **Grace Chinese Mennonite Fellowship, Regina SK**, who is on a 4-month study leave at AMBS, Elkhart, IN from September to December 2003. Pray that she will be re-energized and strengthened on her return.
- Pray for Hun Lee who is resigning from his position as Pastor of **Korean Fellowship, Charleswood Mennonite Church, Winnipeg MB**, effective January 2004. Hun wants to be more focused on evangelistic ministry and discipleship training.
- We praise God for the installation service of James Lin as Pastor of **White Rock Mandarin Mennonite Church, BC** on September 28, 2003. Please continue to pray for James and his wife Jennifer.
- Korean church leader, Bock Ki Kim, recently wrote, "We decided to move once again on November 1st... so this will be the seventh (move in N. America). Whenever we move, I have felt many things: many thanks and appreciations, losses, hardness, sorrow, joy, and so on. I often think about where our home is and how long I have to wait for the end of this kind of journey. It seems that there are many journeys in the journey called life." Please pray for Bock Ki and his family as they continue a pioneer ministry among **Korean communities in the Greater Toronto area**.
- **Grace Chinese Mennonite Church, Vancouver BC** celebrated its 22nd anniversary on October 12, 2003. The Church is lending some assistance to **MCC British Columbia's Praxis Project** by providing space and use of facilities in their building for teams of young people who come to learn about the multicultural setting of the area and the needs in this part of the inner city of Vancouver. Planners anticipate that 10 teams from different churches and groups all over Canada and the USA will visit Vancouver in the next 12 months.
- **Markham Chinese Mennonite Church, ON** celebrated its 13th anniversary on September 7. The church also shares their joy in being accepted as a full member of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada on October 25.
- Jorge Hoajaca, Pastor of **First United Spanish Mennonite Church, Vancouver, BC**, shares that his church celebrated their 11th Anniversary in June. Recently there has been an influx of new arrivals from Colombia. The church is

sparing no effort in helping these people settle into life in Canada, while at the same time trying to reach them for Christ. Some have already started attending church functions.

- On a personal level, Luc Tran, Pastor of **Winnipeg Vietnamese Mennonite Church, MB**, was invited to speak in 2 sessions and conduct a music workshop at Richmond Chinese Baptist Church, Virginia from October 23-27. Responses were positive. On the church level, on June 22 all five multi-cultural congregations – Lao, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese and Spanish - in the Winnipeg area held a joint picnic on the CMU campus. On October 5 they again met together, with representatives from English-speaking Canadian churches, for a multi-cultural worship at Bethel Mennonite. Included in the day's program were diverse selections of music, traditional clothing, scripture reading in different languages from Ephesians 4: 1-5, a puppet show, and a prayer session for the needs of different places around the world. Participants enjoyed specialty snacks from different countries. Both multi-cultural functions had exceedingly good turnouts of well over 200 people.

Prayer Concerns

- The following churches are searching for pastors: **Vancouver Chinese Mennonite Church, BC; Calgary Chinese Mennonite Church, AB; Korean Ministry of Charleswood Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, MB**.
- Sylang Kaneboodtra, the pastor of **Abbotsford Lao Mennonite Church, BC** suffered a minor stroke recently. Please pray for speedy recovery and the pastoral needs of the congregation at this difficult time.
- Ben Yu, a member of **Markham Chinese Mennonite Church, ON** wrote, "Please ask brothers and sisters to pray for my job searching and my study, too."
- Mei Kung Kua, a member of **Toronto United Lao Mennonite Church, ON** asks that we pray for her family who opposes Christianity. Mei is the only Christian in her family and relationships suffer when she resists practicing Buddhism. She also requests prayer for her congregation which consists mostly of newer converts. Mei asks that God will help them grow in spiritual maturity and seek to understand the will of God.
- Praise and thanks be to God to hear from Boris Sithideth, Pastor of **Toronto United Lao Mennonite Church (TULMC)** who shares that TULMC... "is like a beam in a vast darkness. Faced with thousands of Lao immigrants and a variety of Lao communities, TULMC adopts the Missional Church approach. All believers in TULMC are missionaries in our own culture. For now we start with 'across the street'. One day with God's blessing, we will share 'around the world.' TULMC holds Sunday morning services in the offices of a rice warehouse. Our main challenge is a place of worship."