



**Mennonite
Church
Canada**

Witness

February 2004, *Equipping*

600 Shaftesbury Blvd
Winnipeg MB R3P 0M4
T: 204-888-6781
F: 204-831-5675
E: witness@mennonitechurch.ca
W: www.mennonitechurch.ca
Toll-free: 1-866-888-6785

Leadership in a Missional Church — 80 Hours of Hope

—Winnipeg, Manitoba

Leadership in a Missional Church, a Mennonite Church Canada course for church leaders from across the country, saw just over 50 people come to Winnipeg to participate. Throughout the sessions, biblical/theological foundations and historical influences were explored as students discovered what was at the heart of the emergence of missional church understandings. Participants received and developed tools and resources to help congregations understand the implications for the church.

Lay leaders, pastors, and others interested in learning about leadership in the missional church studied, discussed, and inspired each other through four three-day sessions throughout 2003. The sessions included themes such as:

- Worship from a Missional Perspective
- Biblical/Theological foundations and reflection
- Historical/contextual issues and analysis
- Congregational Culture: analysis and transformation
- Appropriate tools for congregational process.

Stories of changed lives and changing congregations highlighted the final session of the course. For some participants, helpful tools for processing congregational change and renewal were welcome knowledge. Billy Chiew, youth pastor at Vancouver Chinese Mennonite hopes that the future will hold renewed enthusiasm within his congregation. He hopes that people will “really get excited once again about God, about what He is going to do... I believe God is doing things all the time.” Chiew believes his experience in the study course will make him an instrument of renewal in his ministry.

For others, the course was an affirmation of their own sense of direction and leadership in their home congregations. Ed Olfert, pastor at Grace Mennonite in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, said, “In many ways, we were a missional church long before we knew the language. This has certainly sharpened the understandings and given us permission to go with even more passion in some of the directions we were going.”

“These 80 hours (of study) have been a tremendous encouragement that God calls us to go towards hope, to name hope, to get alongside hope and to have that hope energize us,” Olfert added.

Planners hope to offer Missional Church Leadership study courses in other area conferences in the future. Please contact the congregational partnership staff in your area conference to learn about similar events planned for your region, or contact Mennonite Church Canada at witness@mennonitechurch.ca. Alberta and Saskatchewan already have some tentative dates lined up.

—Kathy Fast, executive assistant, Mennonite Church Canada Witness