

May 2004, *Equipping*

A Moment for Celebration

We invite you to share the following story with your congregation. It takes no more than 2 minutes to read aloud. Perhaps your church has a tradition of in which your mission or outreach committee shares a story on a monthly basis, or perhaps you'd like to start one in which these impact stories can be shared. You might also wish to include the story in your church newsletter.

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Being the church together, all the way to China!

by Ed Olfert, visitor to China with Mennonite Church Canada Witness



We mounted a makeshift stage at the school that government education officials had chosen as the appropriate site to give out the school kits we had brought from Saskatchewan. Rows of school children, bundled against the cool damp air, lined up before us. A colorful red banner was fastened over our heads, filled with Chinese characters. Some English letters caught our eye. “GEANTEE.” It left us as puzzled as the Chinese writing. It wasn't till much later that we figured out that the letters were an attempt to give honour to Jeanette Hanson, MC Canada WITNESS worker, who had provided much of the energy to make this presentation possible.

Upon further conversation, we realized that local officials had no idea that a church was involved, no idea that this project was a response to faithful discipleship, no idea that followers of Christ find expression in these very practical programs. They had assumed that a few interested people had put this project together, and were amazed that it represented a partnering between CEE workers supported by Mennonite Church Canada, a number of Saskatchewan churches, and the Protestant Church in Nanchong.

The eyes of a number of Chinese officials were opened. They listened, they questioned, they expressed surprise at this unusual way of “doing church,” and they indicated willingness to continue working together with the Hansons and with the church organizations they represent in the future.

—A moment for celebration by Mennonite Church Canada WITNESS