



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.**



As I am writing this as the long summer seems to be winding down. Outside my window it is no longer a red hot sun but a dark grey sky. The weather in the different provinces across Canada of course varies, and what I am describing holds true only for Vancouver, B.C.

I trust that everyone has had a great summer and experienced God's keeping and blessing. I

would like to take this opportunity to share with you some of my ministry activities and travels this summer.

I attended the North American Laotian Mennonite Conference in St. Catharines, Ontario in early July. This is an annual event and I was privileged to meet many Laotian brothers and sisters from many different regions in North America. We fellowshiped and shared and discussed ministry strategies. My sincerest thanks to God and to all the brothers and sisters who helped in various areas, including transportation, food and lodging and prayers. I was invited to speak to the St. Catharines Laotian Mennonite Church at their July 4 Sunday service.

Immediately after I headed for Manitoba to attend the Mennonite Church Canada Annual Assembly in Winkler, Manitoba, which had just been elevated to a city status and was a beautiful place, well suited to be the venue for our gathering. I first took part in the Ministers Conference on July 7, in which we listened to sermons from our speakers and held meetings with pastoral leaders from across Canada. The well-packed day concluded in prayers and a benediction.

The Annual Assembly commenced that very evening and rounded off on July 10. At this conference we saw the attendance of many ethnic leaders who took part in leading worship and group discussions. I was thrilled to see their enthusiastic commitment in the ministry and the warm response of the delegates. I hope to see more brothers and sisters from ethnic groups take part in national and regional functions and activities.

Friday July 9 might well have been the climax of the entire event. That afternoon we took a break from the heavy

schedule and went to a nearby park where booths were set up representing different countries in which Mennonite Church Canada has Witness workers. This was to familiarize people who visited the booths with the ministry and culture of the various regions. The booths were staffed by co-workers who greeted and chatted with visitors. I was overjoyed to see a good turnout of brothers and sisters from diverse ethnic groups in Winnipeg: Korean, Vietnamese, Laotian, Chinese and Spanish, who came in droves to help out in manning the booths. They also brought ethnic foods in various flavors, and multi-cultural exhibits. A most hearty thanks for their enthusiastic participation!

We all felt that it was such a miracle that it rained both the day before and the day after, with July 9 the only nice sunny day sandwiched in between. The great weather brought many local residents to the park. It is estimated that attendance at this gigantic, first-time outdoor ministry party was well over 800.

- Samson

## RESPONSES FROM PARTICIPANTS AT WINKLER 2004

From Yoel Masyawong, pastor of Grace Lao Mennonite Church, Kitchener, ON:

*Greetings from Grace Lao! I really appreciate the subsidy you provided for me to attend the conference.*

*The conference at Winkler was the first time I ever attended a Mennonite Church Canada conference since I started serving at Grace Lao Mennonite Church. I had thought that fortunately I had friends from my area (MCEC) and elder Som Phanpha from Grace Lao Mennonite Church, so at least there would be someone I would have already known from before. I was surprised to see a lot of new faces there and there was a warm welcome for everyone! I met pastors, youth pastors and lay leaders.*

*I enjoyed the workshops at the park, all the music, games and food. It was too bad that we only had half a day. I also had the chance to meet with the Laotian group from Winnipeg.*

# Sharing & prayer concerns

( h i g h l i g h t s f r o m a c r o s s t h e c o u n t r y )

*The theme "Enough for all" was so fitting for this conference, because there was enough of every thing for all who attended this conference. The sermons from Tom Yoder Neufeld touched my heart and provided inspiration for me to serve our Lord Jesus. I went there with nothing but I brought home everything and there's enough for all.*

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From John Melendez, pastor of Iglesia Centro De Fe y Esperanza, Vancouver B.C.:

*It was such a surprise!!!*

*Winkler was my first General Assembly and the truth did not wait for long to come out. I had thought that it was just another assembly, but I was wrong. I learned, shared and was entertained as well. There was enough for all and for me. If there was anyone who benefited from the Assembly it was me. It was the very spiritual refreshment that I needed - the sermons of Brother Tom Yoder Neufeld, the advice and sharing that I received from senior brothers, the seminars, the hymns, the people, the good turnout, the concert, the picnic. It was an experience far more than what I had anticipated.*

## NAK SUN KIM TELLS HIS STORY

My name is Nak Sun Kim. I am married with two cute daughters. I am from South Korea and most of our families still live in South Korea. I came to Canada to study for a bachelor's degree in Christian Studies at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, Manitoba from 1998 to 2002. I have been working on my Master of Theological Studies (Church Ministry Option) at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ontario since September 2002 and I expect to complete my studies in April 2005.

When I was twenty years old, I attended the Christian Theological Seminary, a conservative theological seminary in my country, to study Presbyterian Theology. During my school days in Korea, I struggled between my studies and my Christian life, especially my faith and my life in the world because my school emphasized faith rather than life as a Christian in the world. The more I read the Bible, the more I struggled between faith and life in the world as a Christian. As I read the Bible, I recognized that a Christian had to live in the world as a follower of Jesus, not just in the church. I asked myself, "How do I live as a follower of Jesus in the world?" "What is the role of the church in the secular world?" "How can the church be a church which teaches the Bible?" "What does the Bible say about true Christian spirituality?"

I decided to quit school for one year, and took the Discipleship Training Program for four months, which was run by my home church in Korea. Through the training I understood the relationship between faith and life, and

learned about church community. I went back to school, and at the same time worked with the poor, especially teenagers who had single parents or no parents, every night after classes for three years because I believed that Jesus wanted his followers to be friends of the poor. During my school years in Korea I tried to figure out what is real Christian spirituality rather than just studying about theology at school.

After graduating from my school in Korea, I thought that I needed to study more about church, community, discipleship and the Bible. I heard about the Mennonites from Hun Lee who was the pastor of Charleswood Mennonite Korean Congregation in Winnipeg. As a result of Hun Lee's referral I came to Canadian Mennonite University to study.

Studying Anabaptism at Canadian Mennonite University was a good opportunity to learn new ideas about church, community, peace and discipleship. It became a turning point in my life.

Having studied Mennonite theology and history I believe that the Mennonite church can have an impact on Christianity in Korea, and more specifically, on my faith and life. Although the spirit of 'Mennonitism' is difficult to define, I believe it has some valuable merits to offer to the Korean churches. For example, Korean churches do not emphasize community whereas Mennonite churches have a strong sense of community. Another is that Korean churches tend to be weak in integrating faith and life, while Mennonite churches preach a strong sense of integrating faith and life as followers of Jesus in the world.

I want to be a pastor. I want to live as a disciple of Jesus. I have a vision for the future; some day I am going back to Korea, specifically North Korea, to build a community and peace church based on my studies about Anabaptism, to take care of the poor and the outsiders. Even though I know that being a disciple of Jesus is more important than being a Mennonite, I want to become a member of the Mennonite church and make it the base for my ministry.

## REPORT FROM A SUMMER MISSION TRIP

J.T., a member of Grace Chinese Mennonite Church, Vancouver B.C. and a final year student in Simon Fraser University, B.C., attended a five-week summer missional learning tour in China.

J.T. shares:

*One of the greatest highlights of this trip was sharing Christ with the students. During the first week, time outside of our language and culture classes was spent making as many friends as we could. We visited students at their dorms, met students at the cafeteria, English Corner and around the campus. We hosted a Canada Party and invited students to learn about our culture*

through games and short presentations.

For the weeks following, we began meeting with our new friends on a one to one basis to find those who were interested in spiritual issues. With some of them we held individual Bible studies, showed the Jesus video or simply shared the 4 Spiritual Laws. Many students believe that God does not exist because they were taught that in school for their whole life. Students dream of finding a good job that will help them provide for their families but not much more. It was a privilege to be used by God to sow the seeds of the Gospel in their lives.

In general, this trip really took me to another level of maturity in Christ. If I had to sum up this mission trip in one phrase, I would say that it was all about KNOWING JESUS BETTER. It was about getting to know His heart, learning to recognize His voice and discerning the truth from the lies. I hope to continue to grow and cut away things that are unfruitful. Currently, I am learning and reading about prayer and discipleship – areas I would like to grow in.

## PEOPLE & CONGREGATION UPDATE

From Garry Janzen, Senior Pastor, Sherbrooke Mennonite Church, Vancouver, BC

For six months - March through August, 2004 - God placed a man in our midst who could help us understand the people and the ministry possibilities in our neighbourhood. Sherbrooke Mennonite Church is in a neighbourhood that has a significant population of Indo-Canadian people, especially of the Sikh religion. Thomaskutty Kakkanattil (Thomas) came to live in our neighbourhood with the intention of exploring possibilities in Sikh ministries and meeting and praying with these people. When possible, he worshipped with us at Sherbrooke. Between Nhien Pham (our Vietnamese Pastor), James Wittenberg (our Youth Pastor) and myself, we often had occasion to discuss ministry vision and opportunities in our community. We agreed that the best place to begin was to invite Thomas to give a seminar on ministry with Sikh people. This took place on July 26<sup>th</sup>.

In this seminar we learned that it is better to present the Gospel in writing and give them an opportunity to read it on their own time, than to do a verbal presentation. We learned that one should not argue with a Sikh because it is like arguing with their guru, and that is an offence. We learned that prayer is the key - pray for them, and as we build relations, pray with them - especially for their personal and family needs. A Sikh always looks for a sign; answered prayer is a significant sign. We also learned that it is all about love; if we don't have love for these neighbours and are not willing to put this love into action, then we may as well not even try reaching them. Lastly we learned that it is essential to have a Punjabi speaker to lead. This is our prayer, that if we are to begin to reach the Sikh people in our neighbourhood, that the Lord would provide a Punjabi Christian to give leadership. Thomas has returned to the Punjab where he serves in

ministry.

- We celebrate with **Takahiko & Mari Yoshiyuski**, the pastor couple of both **Vancouver Mennonite Japanese Christian Fellowship & North Shore Japanese Mennonite Church**, B.C., who thank God for giving them a new born baby boy on July 2 named Setsu, which means "The Son of Adam & Eve".
- **Young Ho Park & Young Gee Na** resigned from and left the **Korean Ministry of Valleyview Mennonite Church**, London ON at the end of July. May God bless their future ministry.
- **Luc Tran** reports from **Winnipeg** that around 150 people showed up at the multi-cultural picnic at St. Vital Park on August 2, organized by our various **ethnic groups in Winnipeg MB**. There were songs, prayer, ethnic foods from various cultures, games and sportive activities. Everyone enjoyed this kind of interactive and cross-cultural fellowship.
- A Food Fair was held on September 11 at **Winnipeg Vietnamese Mennonite Church** with monies raised in this event going to the support of the needs of **Mennonite Church Vietnam**.

## INTERNATIONAL UPDATE

As mentioned in our July Newsletter, **Vietnamese Mennonite** leader Pastor Nguyen Hong Quang was arrested by Vietnamese authorities on June 8, 2004. Earlier, in March, four of his colleagues were detained and remain in custody on unspecified charges. Here is an update from **North American Vietnamese Mennonite Fellowship** regarding the situation:

'...the authorities are very angry and upset at the amount of international attention they are receiving over the Mennonites and especially Quang and so are pushing to "resolve" the case in a September trial. This is definitely a "fast-track" for that system! A trial is felt to be 90 per cent certain, and a dismissal 10 per cent.'

The **Vietnam Evangelical Fellowship** sent out a letter asking for prayer support on August 30, 2004:

"On 18-6-2004, The National Assembly Standing Committee issued an official Ordinance on Religion, ...scheduled to come into effect on the 15-11-2004. This Ordinance will create many problems and disadvantages for the church, especially for our gatherings for worship and at the same time it will highly likely, permanently outlaw our house churches that have not been recognized since 1975. Many articles in this Ordinance will also provide a legal basis for local authorities to hinder and persecute the church.

In this situation, we feel the call of God to ... humble ourselves, calling upon our God for the church and for freedom of worship to God in Vietnam."

They call upon all Christians world-wide "... to devote three days each month, from September to November 2004, as following: 5-7 September; 3-5 October; 7-9 November, in order to fast and pray ..."