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It's Epic: Remembering God's Future



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And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God...And the city has no need of sun and moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. Its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. People will bring into it the glory and the honour of the nations. (Revelation 21: 1a, 23-26)

What an incredible vision of hope where God's presence is so near and universal that it gives light to every aspect of communal life. What an incredible vision of security where evil has been banished and the gates of God's city are open in welcome, and honour the gifts of every culture.

This vision is part of the scriptural text for next summer's Mennonite Church Canada Assembly, which will be hosted by Mennonite Church Eastern Canada. The theme, *It's Epic: Remembering God's Future*, will encourage us as a national church to live out God's vision of a diverse people who recognize and celebrate the gifts that God has given each culture and mature in our ability to live in harmony with one another.

In a world where fear and threats to national security cultivate wariness and building walls rather than creating gates, we as the church are challenged and given the opportunity to imagine how God's city will be built in our communities. The gap between current reality and what God envisions seems impossible to bridge, yet God's kingdom-building

plan consistently uses an unlikely, yet accessible building tool:

Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come to you and eat with you, and you with me. Revelation 3:20

As pastors and church leaders, whatever the challenges of our current reality, this personal, relational, and community-sustaining tool is already present in Jesus Christ. Like the four Pevensie siblings in C.S. Lewis's *Narnia Chronicles*, we must continually enter the strange and wonderful world of God's story and let its vision and passion transform us so that we can lead our congregations in allowing God's vision of the new Jerusalem to be the door through which they see their world. So how will we ensure that our ears can hear the frequency of God's knock in the retreat of our study and at our leadership tables?

God's voice is just as likely to be heard as we walk through doors into our local community. Consider a listening tour of your neighbourhood or community, where you are open to receiving the hopes and challenges of local business owners, community agencies, and those who live in the neighbourhood. What do you hear God saying through these voices?

Let's be visionaries like John, the author of *Revelation*, who in imaginative ways holds before our congregations God's vision of communities that welcome God's light to open doors of healing and hope in our communities.