

November/December 2008, *Equipping* #91



Simply, breathtaking...

Oh, my breath has been taken away before. I've seen some of the world's spectacular sights, been on lots of flights with air turbulence, heard some inspiring music, eaten delectable food, watched the recent stock market roller coaster... and even tried to run up 14 flights of stairs once. But this summer was the first time I experienced someone literally breathless at the thought of their church being able to reach out to someone they did not know how to reach.

It was one of those providential encounters at this summer's Assembly. I had a vehicle, some foreign language ability, and 2 addresses where I was supposed to pick up Assembly guests. The guests happened to be church planters. One, recently arrived in Canada and acquiring English and French language skills. The others, long time mission workers in francophone Africa. Since I was the only one who knew all of them, I served as chauffeur, introducer, and translator. As we grew familiar with one another's language limitations, the conversation progressed and each shared of the ministry they were engaged in. When it was learned that the workers in Africa were coming to North America for a period of study, the audible "gasp" came out and we paused a few minutes until the new Canadian's composure returned. "What if...?" she gasped. "What if you were to come to our church and would use your French language skills to help us connect to the French speaking Africans in our community?" The thought of that possibility sent visible shivers up and down her spine...

I don't know whether that possibility will materialize, but I do know that that reaction was inspiring to me and reminded me of the image and attitude of God as described in the parable of the lost son. "But while he was yet far off, his father saw him, and was ***moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.*** .. the father said to his servants, Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat, and make merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." (Luke 15:20-24)

May God gift us with the vision and people who are breathless at the thought of growing our communities of faith.

–Tim Froese, Acting Executive Secretary, Mennonite Church Canada Witness