



Coming together NETWORKS

Vision Ministries Canada believes it is well-connected to the leaders of approximately 125 churches across Canada. Just over 20 of these are churches we helped plant. All of the 125 are concerned about having more impact in their community, and on this country.

But some years ago, we began to understand that many of the leaders of these fellowships are not connected to each other. Sometimes they knew the leaders of other churches in the local community. Some were well connected to other parachurch organizations that helped them realize their local mission.

We think that the Bible shows local churches should be interdependent. It seems that impact is magnified by network. So we've been working to develop the connection between the leaders we know well. These people tend to be in one of the three types of churches we know best: VMC church plants; miscellaneous churches that agree with our vision and beliefs (check out our website) which have asked to affiliate with us; and churches with Christian Brethren roots that we describe as "adaptive chapels and churches".

Gradually over the past three years, we've drawn our friends into geographically-based networks of leaders, who meet 2-3 times/year. They come together to support and pray for each other, and have begun to discuss ways they can cooperate together. There will soon be functioning networks based around Halifax, Montreal, Peterborough ON, Barrie ON, the east and west sides of Toronto, Kitchener/Waterloo ON, London ON, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver, and Victoria. Contact us so that we can introduce you to our friends in your region.

And who knows? We may even see a new church plant or two born out of this kind of cooperation.



National Congress planned for November

Church Planting Canada has many of the same goals as Vision Ministries Canada - but magnified. One of the giant ways they express their vision for Canada is as a belief that "God will plant 10,000 new disciple-making communities (churches) by 2015." This vision was set at their first National Congress in Bramalea ON in 1997. The vision was built upon at the second National Congress in Mississauga in 1999. By 2001 in Montreal, it was beginning to be clear that great strides had been made, and that God was bringing his people together to see this accomplished.

Well it's nearly two years later. Church planters and church planting organizations have been invited to Vancouver for the "Next" National Congress. And Vision Ministries Canada will be there, as it has been at each of the previous congresses. Once again, our Executive Director has helped put the conference together (Gord also sits on the Board of CPC and helps coordinate the CPC-associated Southern Ontario Church Planting Network). And again this year, we're hoping to take many VMC church planters along with us to this event.

People who will be in Vancouver in November - VMC people included - aren't just goofing-off at a convention. The speakers are exceptional, the seminars are extremely practical, and the connections are invaluable (the writer isn't sure that

any conference can be quite this good - but it's close!). Eddie Gibbs, Connie denBok, Claude Payne, and *SoulTsunami* author Len Sweet are the main presentors. And the Congress will ask participants to consider:

- What Does God Want to Do Next?
- Next ... Generation Issues?
- Next ... Steps in a Movement?
- Next ... Steps in Planting a Church?
- Next ... Steps for Denominations?
- Next ... Issues for the Church? etc...

The Congress organizers have realized - as most of us have - that we live in changing times. Increasingly we find ourselves sharing the Good News with people who have never heard of Jesus or who are opposed to "church". No longer can we be effective in church planting without facing the issues that will shape the way in which we do this. And we've realized that our focus can't just be on church planting, but on what kind of churches we plant.

So Vision Ministries is encouraging anyone with interest to come along with us to Vancouver for November 19-21, 2003. There is lots more information at www.outreach.ca/cpc or talk to VMC (our contact info is on page 3). And if you think you can help with the cost of getting a church planter to Vancouver and home, we would be particularly glad to hear from you.



*Almost 200 people were singing. The key presenter was Roy Matheson, speaking about *The Supernatural Side of Ministry*. But we got a better picture of Gord Martin than we did of Roy Matheson at the Leadership Development Day we sponsored last November in Oakville, ON. That's okay, because Gord will be one of the keynote presentors at our event in Oakville this year, on November 15, 2003. Roy Matheson will be presenting on his subject at similar events in Vancouver (October 18, 2003), Montreal (November 1, 2003), and Red Deer, AB (April 3, 2004). More information including registration details for upcoming VMC events is on page 6 of this issue.*



General Directions

It's taken me a while, but I've spent enough time working with the groups of churches we call Regional Vision Networks (see story on page 1), that I think I'm finally convinced that it's just as legitimate for God to reach new people through an existing church, as through a church plant. I really am happy when unchurched people arrive at Lincoln Road Chapel - right here at my fellowship - not at one of the church plants that have grown out of it. When I hear that one of the churches I know in western Canada is growing, expanding, people are finding Jesus, new services are being added; I celebrate with them. Vision Ministries is interested in all kinds of expansion of the kingdom.

But there is something in me that loves brand new local churches. Maybe it was the experiences I had at Capilano Christian Assembly, Spirit River Christian Community Church or Sherwood Park Community Church. Hard and good times in each of those places - and I suspect I'll be drawn to try again.

So, you'll have to excuse me this month for including the church plant cartoon on this page, and these words received last spring from planter Lawson Murray at Orillia Community Church. Chalk it up to nostalgia.

You know you're in church planting when . . .

The church address and phone number are the same as your home address and phone number.

The Smith family with their six children don't come to church and people ask, "Where is everyone?"

Your service, held in a hotel conference room, is interrupted by someone looking for the Omothologists conference.

You need to speak to the Awana Commander, sound engineer, finance committee and small group leader but he's away this Sunday.

Every piece of furniture, sound equipment, Sunday school paraphernalia, musical instruments, and the items on the literature table have to be set up and packed away every Sunday.

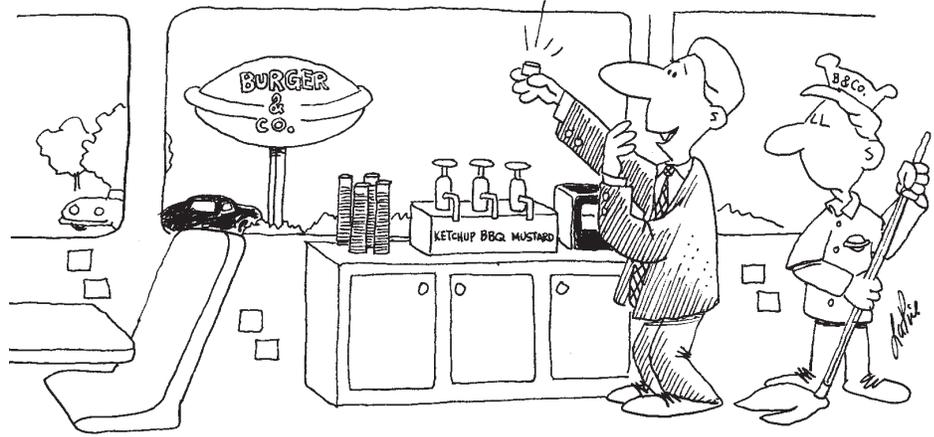
Anything and everything that has life (or some life) is counted for Sunday attendance.

The pulpit is a music stand.

The trunk of your car is the church filing cabinet.

You wake up from a nightmare in which no one came to the Sunday service except for you and the worship team.

You get to church and it's just you and the worship team!



New church plant member James Stevens discovers an economical source for communion cups.

2nd Thoughts

from Gord Martin

One Body... One Lord

Part II



"There is one body (church) and one Spirit - just as you were called to one hope when you were called - one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all". Ephesians 4:4,5

How can we legitimately express the truth of this teaching of Scripture among churches of our community?

We have an obligation

The Bible teaches it. Jesus commanded his disciples to love one another, John 13:34. He prayed for their unity, John 17:20,21. He spoke gently of those who were not "of us," Mark 9:38-40. The apostle Paul said that those who affirm Jesus as Lord are a part of his body, I Corinthians 12:3. And he praised God even for those who preached Christ in order to bring greater persecution to him! Philippians 1:18 We are obligated to reflect a practical commitment to the truth of the one body by the way we interact with those in our communities who identify themselves with our one and only Lord Jesus Christ. If they say they are followers of his and are considered as such by the people in our neighbourhoods, then we must think carefully about how we interact with them.

Conscience demands it

We should not fool ourselves into thinking that we are obeying the Lord in this matter if we only give passive consent to the truth of the one body of Christ. Unity is not an abstract idea but a spiritual reality and a relationship to be realized.

Reputation requires it

Any group of people that meets in the name of Jesus or declares that they are followers of his share a joint reputation with us, whether we agree with them on all points or not.

Reputation has to do with what others think of us. Those who are not followers of Jesus lump all so-called Christians together whether we like it or not. Those who are serious Christians should make every effort to be one and to present themselves to an unbelieving

world as one, just as our Lord prayed we would be.

Is this easy or simple? Of course not!

The extent of unity may be unequal

We have much more in common with some churches than with others. In our nation we have three large groupings of churches: Roman Catholic, traditional Protestant and evangelical. We

have the most in common with other evangelical churches, but will discover surprises of oneness among the other groups as well. So we should express this theme of oneness more intensely with those who are more like us. And even with those who are less like us we should at least show respect.

How unity can be expressed

Partnership activities

When we are full partners we freely share: beliefs, values, funds, people resources, leaders and ongoing ministry commitments.

**Unity is
a spiritual
reality and a
relationship
to be realized**



Jay Gurnett thinking@vision-ministries.org

One Body from page 2

Network activities

We network with other churches when we share major beliefs, have many similar values and commit ourselves to informal links and occasional joint projects.

Common cause activities

We can support common moral or social causes in our communities with many different groups with whom we have relatively little in common by way of theology or primary values.

Individual co-operation

Many members of our churches will commit themselves personally to interdenominational activities. Some will feel far greater latitude and freedom in these activities than others. But our congregations should not simply release their members to co-operative causes. The leaders of our churches should show the way in expressing obedience to the truth of the one body in the churches of our communities.

How unity may be achieved

Before committing ourselves to working with other churches in our communities we should consider: Will this be a personal commitment? Will it be an ongoing partnership of churches? Will it be a co-operative network of churches? Or will it be a common cause effort?

If it is to be a relationship of partnering we ought to thoroughly talk through our beliefs,

values, purposes and strategies before we commit ourselves to working together. Failure to do so often leads to disillusionment, division and frustration later on. Don't let your good desire to express your commitment to unity over-ride the need for thoughtful dialogue at the beginning.

If it's a working relationship that could be described as a network, the dialogue is still important but the degree of commonality may be less. We have much in common with many churches with which we can work together to address kingdom projects in our communities. But don't hesitate to be clear and honest with each other at the outset so that your projects have the greatest chance of success.

And if we are talking about common causes we only need to be clear about what the common cause is. We may have different beliefs, motives and desired secondary outcomes, but we can work together for specific purposes like opposing pornography, injustice or communal concerns. And one more thing! Be respectful of these folks while in the process. Our reputation as Christians counts. All people were created after God's image. We are to treat them as if we believed that reality.

And we have a major obligation to all who are in Christ particularly, not at the cost of our convictions but because of them.

Gord Martin

gord@vision-ministries.org

VMC directors are forgetful

It's not that we can't use more, it's just that we forget to, or maybe don't exactly want to, talk about money. Vision Ministries Canada runs on a slim budget, just the way we want it to. And we're confident that God can provide our needs - as he has done since we were formally constituted eleven years ago.

But we are reminded by our friends from time to time, that if we explain the needs, it helps people understand us better, and decide about how they should give the money God has given them.

What we spend

We continue to grow and have reached the point where our annual operation uses about \$300,000. Of our expenditures nearly half is money that we transfer through to church planters and churches. We spend almost one-third of our funds on the five half-time employees of the organization, including some honoraria we give to others. About \$10,000 per year is used to produce this newsletter. The other \$40-50,000 is used for general operation. This includes buying books and other resource materials (some for re-sale), running computers, telephones, copier, operating 3 or 4 one-day events across Canada, plus some special events for key leaders, travel, and lots of other little things.

Where it comes from

One-half to two-thirds of the money we use comes from large donors. We usually receive a major grant from Stewards Ministries in Illinois when we help a new church get started. Other major donors (a few key individuals and one other foundation), have given to help churches

in their second or third year of operation.

Generally we take in about \$20,000/year by reselling books and in the offerings collected at Leadership Development Days (of course we usually have just a tiny bit left from these activities once all expenses are paid). VMC receives the proceeds from an endowment that came from the sale of a church building. This was the money used to start up the organization in 1992. Earnings on this lump sum vary and have been slim over the past few years, but we hope to receive about \$15,000/annum from our investments. The other \$75,000+ that we need to operate comes from about 30 supportive churches (some are VMC church plants who support us for supporting them) and from a whole bunch of interested individuals - like the people who receive *thinking ahead*. Individuals give us \$50-65,000/year. Most of those gifts are relatively small - under \$250 each. But it only takes 200 gifts of \$250 to double our revenue from individuals in some years. And we appreciate even very tiny gifts (really do see them as from the Lord).

So we are glad for your thoughts and prayers about our financial situation. And we're happy if God leads you to send some money to Vision Ministries. Sometimes we struggle with having enough cash on hand to meet all expenses, so would appreciate having some partners who would help support us on a regular basis throughout the year. We intend to be willing to talk about our financial situation. Feel free to contact Jay or Gord.



Board of Directors

Paul Fletcher, Elmira
Bruce Fournier, Waterloo
Doug Loveday, Lucan
Alan Veale, Ajax
Tom Williams, Mississauga

Council of Reference

Bill Armerding, Richmond, BC
Joel Coppieters, Farnham, PQ
Tom Cowan, Victoria, BC
Paul Irwin, Hawkesville, ON
David Knight, Dollard des Ormeaux, PQ
Ted McKellar, Sherwood Park, AB
Bill McRae, Apsley, ON
Greg Paul, Toronto, ON
Hugh Rodger, Weston, ON
Fernand Saint Louis, Beloeil, PQ
Steve Tulloch, Waterloo, ON
Geoff Tunnicliffe, Burnaby, BC
Rod Wilson, Burnaby, BC

Staff

Gord Martin, Jay Gurnett, Dave McClurkin,
Allan Poyntz, Henrietta Koenig, Norm Gentry,
Paul Hoffman, Alan Veale

CONTACT INFORMATION:

thinking ahead/Vision Ministries Canada
145 Lincoln Road, Waterloo, ON N2J 2N8
Phone: 519-725-1212 Fax: 725-9421
Toll-Free Telephone Number:
877-509-5060

e-mail: thinking@vision-ministries.org
Home Page: www.vision-ministries.org

thinking ahead is published 4 times/year by Vision Ministries in an effort to connect like-minded Christians and their local churches and encourage them to work cooperatively, especially in evangelism through church planting. Subscriptions are free, but VMC encourages supporters to send \$15/year to help cover costs (tax receipts are not given for subscription donations). Spending of funds received by VMC is confined to board approved programs and purchases. Each gift designated toward an approved program will be used as designated with the understanding that when any given need has been met, designated gifts will be used where needed most. Gifts of \$10 or more are acknowledged with an official receipt for income tax purposes. We appreciate notification of double mailings, names for our mailing list, or if a name should be deleted. Publications Mail Agreement Number: 40016262. Articles may be copied for limited circulation without permission. Please include the credit line: "Reprinted from *thinking ahead* (1-877-509-5060)."

PEOPLE AND BUILDINGS

Dave McClurkin retreated with the leadership team at Orillia (ON) Community Church this past spring. You can see Dave standing behind the guys in the picture at the bottom. Meanwhile, out in Strome (AB), there's a new ramp leading up to the doorway of their lovely church building - just finished at the end of May (picture to the right). Vision Ministries is happy to be connected to both of these churches; both are full of good people, strongly impacting their communities. Of course both churches also have struggles.

Strome is a tiny little rural community. Difficult to build a church there that is big enough to support a full-time pastor. We don't hear any complaints, but know that Brian and Pat McGaffigan have two daughters away at university, and most of the same expenses of every other household in Canada.

Orillia Community Church is bigger (Orillia itself is nearly 200 times as big as Strome). But even though OCC would like to move into a building of their own, it's very hard for a medium-sized church to build a facility that is adequate, and that they can afford. The independence of the churches we know doesn't help in these situations. VMC wonders if this could change. If any of our readers think that God might be leading them to help pay for buildings or support pastors in our churches, we would be glad to hear of it. Contact VMC if you would like to help either of these churches. Contact info is on page 3.



HEALTH PLANS

Dental bills seem to get higher with every toothache. Long-term disability insurance is very expensive. And pastors/workers in small churches don't have many options.

Not any more. Gary Alexander (519-501-1555 or garyal@sympatico.ca), a good friend of Vision Ministries, has worked hard to figure out less expensive, good quality ways to provide insurance benefits (dental, drug, life, disability) to individuals. He has options for pastors in VMC-associated churches that he's glad to explain and make available. We're glad to recommend Gary and these possibilities.



Books

Good books we've heard about lately. Vision Ministries Canada Resource Centre can make these books available by mail. Contact Henrietta at 877-509-5060.



Seize the Day Meditations for the Year

Lawson Murray
2002, Word Alive,
paper, 396 pages,
7.5"x9.25", \$29.97

Vision Ministries Canada church planter Lawson Murray has written a lovely book of devotional meditations. We were very pleased, but not surprised, to see this quality from this man who is also a gifted planter. I was particularly glad to see on page 206 that Lawson eventually discovered that Suzuki was not a god. Good stuff, brother.

- Jay

The Younger Evangelicals Facing the Challenges of a New World

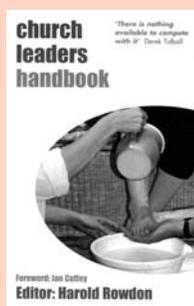
Robert E. Webber

2002, Baker Books, 283 pages

Evangelicalism has thrived for the last three centuries as a faithful expression of historic Christianity, emphasizing salvation by faith alone and the Bible as the inspired word of God. The history of evangelicalism paralleled the enlightenment and the ensuing modern era. With the death of modernity, many wonder what shape and direction the movement will

take. Robert Webber writes about an emerging generation of evangelicals - a group that looks different than their forerunners, but appears just as committed to biblical Christianity. He suggests that the younger evangelicals value tradition, prefer narrative to proposition, long for an embodiment of truth rather than mere argumentation, and are shaped more by images than print. Young evangelical churches are mission not market driven. Their leaders prefer the model of servant over CEO. Teaching is about formation not just information, and evangelism is about relationships not rallies. This new book by Webber is descriptive and insightful. It will challenge and stretch you. And while you may not easily embrace every aspect of this new expression of evangelical faith, you will be encouraged to discover that the younger evangelicals are radically serious about personal discipleship and global transformation.

- Mike Stone, Burlington ON



The Church Leaders Handbook

General Editor

Harold Rowdon,

2002, Published for

Partnership by

Paternoster Publishing,

paper, 390 pages, 5.5"x9"

This is without doubt the most adventurous publication to come out of the Partnership 'stable' in the United Kingdom. It contains 51 articles by 44

authors, many of them authorities in their fields. The articles are grouped in five sections dealing with: church leadership, church activities, church management, pastoral matters, and legal/financial/practical issues.

The vision for this noble task was planted in the hearts of two progressive Brethren thinkers, Angus Jamieson (from Scotland) & Harold Rowdon (from England) several years ago. They spent considerable time deciding the subjects they felt would be most relevant to our churches and then found the best contributors to write the chapters on each subject. The result is a wonderful resource guide for any leader in, what they would class as, an 'emerging Brethren church'. In fact this guide has so impressed others within the wider church community in the UK that two of its most prominent spokesmen, Derek Tidball (principal of London Bible College) & Ian Coffey (from the Baptist Union of GB) include significant tributes in the book. Tidball goes so far as to state "There is nothing available to compete with it"!

Since each chapter is written by a different author, a critique of the whole book or separate contributions is not very helpful. I would recommend that each church that identifies with the basic principles of VMC purchase a copy of this resource guide and make it available for their leadership team. Its benefit will be seen when it is used as a starting point for thinking on some of the issues addressed. No doubt this will lead to wider reading & discussion. But you have at your disposal here a wealth of tested experience & proven knowledge from many leaders who are significantly ahead in their thinking.

- Don Palmer, Pickering, ON

PLANTING ON PURPOSE: Called to Stay or Called to Go?

We've all heard of those churches that sprout up out of relative obscurity through a tiny handful of enthusiasts. God can indeed work mightily and mysteriously! But there is also something to be said for planting through planning. It was true for purpose-driven Paul, first century apostle to the Hellenistic world, and it is just as true for a group of saints today in east Edmonton.

Capilano Christian Assembly began with a small group in the late 70's, through the faithfulness of some instructors from Mount Carmel Bible School. Ten years ago, the believers at Capilano sensed God urging them to pray and prepare for an eventual "daughter" church. Their goal was to grow and disciple their folks well until they reached a critical mass of 400. Then they would strategically commission a full one-quarter of their congregation to plant a church in another sector of their city. Capilano has three paid staff, including Stan King Jr. Stan and Becky, who have 4 children, came to Capilano in 1985. They ministered for many years as lay leaders overseeing the young adults ministry at Capilano. In 2001, Stan left his law practice and came on staff at Capilano, primarily in the area of congregational care.

Ten years of steady, intentional development has paid off. Capilano is now on the verge of seeing God's plan come to fruition! So, one year ago, twenty of their people gathered at a pivotal meeting to pray about the specifics. A location was narrowed down to south central Edmonton, where evangelical churches are sparse. Approximately 100 core members are on board to go. But what about the rest?

Anyone who has been directly involved in church daughtering knows it is also difficult for the senders. The mother church experiences the harsh pangs of producing new life and

sometimes falls into a sort of post-partum low afterwards. There is the pain of the loss of loved ones, leadership roles are left vacant; and those who are left may perceive themselves as less faithful in their difficult decision to stay.

Even these realities have received thorough attention at Capilano. Since last September, they have rallied around the theme: "Called to Stay or Called to Go". Those staying have been challenged to a heightened sense of intentional service to their Capilano community. "These people are not staying by default," says Stan King. "In the process of planting, the remaining people have had a renewed calling to be here" - just as much as the planned planters feel called to venture forth.

For the mother and daughter churches of Capilano Christian Assembly, let's be prayerful.

WHEN GOD WORKS

This email was received early in the year by one of the pastors of a church plant not far from Vision Ministries' offices. The writer came to church as a seeker and found a relationship with Jesus. She is still on the journey but is learning how to rest in God's providence and care. You will see that when God works He often does so in a way that leaves no doubt who's in charge.

Dear Dave,

I must let you know what happened in my life on Sunday. I always loved the parable of the Prodigal son, so your sermon had special meaning for me. I can't explain what I felt hearing about God's outrageous love and your message of hope through prayer. All I could think about was my two children and how life had taken a very unexpected turn for me.

That's why before I left the school we meet in, I mentioned that I had only seen my daughter once in the past two years but that I had hope she would return home one day. My

son was coming over for dinner that day, and in the afternoon I received a phone call. It was Michael. A chill came over me when I heard him say, "Mom - Juliann would like to come for dinner too. Can I bring her with me?"

Juliann is fifteen years old and the past few years have been extremely tumultuous for her. When she arrived she shared some of the trials and angst she has been going through.

We didn't have a fatted calf for the meal, but we did have a party set in the dining room. We had beef stew and potatoes (one of her favorites) and a bread dish that our family calls "monkey bread," that is reserved for special occasions. Topping it off was a huge chocolate trifle. There were candles, and music playing.

I gave Juliann the Christmas gifts that I had been holding for two years. The present wrapped so long before was a watch with matching bracelet set. And tucked inside was my diamond eternity ring. She recognized it, and I knew how much it meant to her. That's when the parallel to the parable really began to be clear: a ring for her finger just like the prodigal son. I was taken aback when I realized the similarities.

Greg was there to share all of these blessings with me. My son was originally coming to dinner to meet Greg. After my children left, Greg and I spoke about the power of prayer and God's love. What are the chances of my prodigal daughter returning on this very day? Coincidence or divine intervention? I know it's the latter and I am thankful to God for this precious gift.

I know the road with my daughter will be a long and rocky one. And possibly she will withdraw again and I may not see or hear from her for a very long time. But with the power of prayer and the Lord's help - there is always hope. I will be patient and trust in Him.

Sincerely, Diane

Praying for church plants

Please pray regularly for churches that VMC has been significantly involved with. We're happy to have anyone join our regular e-list to receive church plant prayer requests. Please contact gord@vision-ministries.org to receive monthly updates.

1. Cambridge Community Church, Cambridge, ON
1992 - Rob and Helen Heintz, Dave and Gladys McClurkin
2. Maranatha/Elim Bible Fellowship, Arkona, ON
1994/1998 - Dave and Sandie Daley
3. New Hope Community Church, Waterloo, ON
1996 - Steve and Deb Tulloch
4. Cornerstone Bible Fellowship, Ethel, ON
1996 - Andrew Versteeg
5. The Cornerstone Community Church, Barrie, ON
1997 - Ron and Winnie Seabrooke
6. The Bridge, Bancroft, ON

7. Quinte Bible Chapel, Belleville, ON
1997
8. Rock Ministries, South River, ON
(youth ministry)
1997 - Matt and Sue Craig
9. Bethany Gospel Chapel, Regina, SK (re-plant)
1998
10. Brant Community Church, Brantford, ON
1999 - Andy and Theresa Flatt
11. Strome Community Church, Strome, AB
1999 - Brian and Pat McGaffigan
12. Heidelberg Bible Fellowship, Heidelberg, ON
1999 - Randy and Sherri Hoffman
13. Orillia Community Church, Orillia, ON
1999 - Lawson and Karen Murray
14. Grace Community Church, Edmonton, AB
2000 - Dawit and Seble Isaac
15. Calvary Bible Church, Summerside, PEI

- 2000 - Rusty and Vanessa Fulp
16. Ilderton Community Church, Ilderton, ON
2000 - Scott and Esther Dakin
17. Central Community Church, Kitchener, ON
2000 - Dave and Mary Patterson
18. Sackville Bible Chapel, Lower Sackville, NS
(re-plant)
2001 - Gary and Karen Glidden
19. Alliance Community Church, Alliance, AB
2001 - Brian McGaffigan
20. Bow Waters Community Church, Calgary AB
(replant)
2002 - Doug and Kari Seiwert
21. Heavenly Light, Toronto, ON
2002 - Yonatan Hiray
22. Lifegate, Windsor, ON
2002
23. Southview Christian Fellowship, Edmonton, AB
2003 - Stan and Becky King

A little help for our friends

Two close friends of Vision Ministries Canada are involved in facilitating events that some of our readers will find helpful (and we want to help our friends with a little promotion).

Ron Johnston, who spent a number of years as an associate of VMC, now works with International Teams (lots more of our friends over there). Ron has always had, still has, a heart for small churches. He reminds us regularly that 70% of the evangelical churches in Canada have Sunday attendance of less than 125 (most of those, 50% of Canadian evangelical churches, have less than 75 in attendance). And gentle a guy as he is, Ron sometimes gets a little frustrated with the fact that most seminars for churches, seem to be designed for the other 30% - even for the just 3% (or about 300 churches) that have more than 500 attendees.

But Ron and IT aren't sitting around complaining. They've arranged an event to be held at Tyndale Seminary on October 4, that they are calling "A Small Church Celebration." They've planned a day of testimonies, teaching and worship (altogether a day of celebration), particularly for leaders of the 70%. Ron is convinced that leaders of small churches need to hear stories of how God is working in other small groups, and to hear creative ministry ideas that have been developed in those groups. We think he's right. Conference registration info is in the events column at the bottom of this page.

Then there's our friend Len Habermehl. We try to slip him in to *thinking ahead* every once in a while just because we like him so much. He's on the Leadership Team and is a part-time pastor at Lincoln Road Chapel with Gord Martin and Jay Gurnett. He also helps facilitate a group called The Small Groups Network in and

around Waterloo, ON. Len and friends have put together a conference to be held in our building in mid-October. More info below. If you end up at that event, Len will be the fellow who welcomes you, before you get a chance to say Hi to him.



David Ralph

(and Gord Martin)
Lakeside Church, Guelph, ON

An Undeniable Impact

A Church With An
Undeniable Impact
Creating a Community
Impacting Vision
Connecting the Church to Its
Community
Practical Steps to Impacting
Your Community

November 15/2003
8:30am-3:59pm

Oakridge Bible Chapel
2250 8th Line, Oakville, ON
877-509-5060
to register (by November 10)



Roy Matheson

Tyndale Seminary/Chartwell Baptist Church
Toronto/Oakville, ON

on

The Supernatural Side of Ministry

Supernatural guidance
Supernatural resources
Supernatural healing
Supernatural and demonization

October 18/2003

8:30am-3:59pm

University Chapel
5375 University Blvd.
VANCOUVER

Register by October 13, 2003

November 1/2003

8:30am-3:59pm

Westview Bible Church
16789 Pierrefonds Blvd.
PIERREFONDS/MONTREAL

Register by October 27, 2003

April 3/2003

9:00am-3:59pm

Balmoral Bible Chapel
Highway 11 East (E. of 30th)
RED DEER, AB

Register by April 03, 2004

Call
877-509-5060
to Register

*VMC Development Days:
Excellent speakers present interactive seminars on
issues that matter for leaders and key volunteers in
contemporary churches. Lunch is provided.
No charge (we take an offering).*

October 4, 2003 / International Teams presents: A Small Church Celebration with Dr. Andrew Irvine 8:30 am - 4 pm at Tyndale College and Seminary, 25 Ballyconnor Court, Toronto More info from Ron.Johnston@iteams.org To register call 519-294-0056

October 18, 2003 / VMC Leadership Development Day with Roy Matheson on The Supernatural Side of Ministry 8:30 am-3:59 pm at University Chapel, 5375 University Blvd, Vancouver Register by October 13 at 877-509-5060

October 18, 2003 / Small Groups Conference with Tim Volkman of Centre Street Church, Calgary on Community Inside Out 8:30 am - 4 pm at Lincoln Road Chapel, 145 Lincoln Road, Waterloo, ON More info at www.smallgroupsnetwork.net Register at 800-839-4769

November 1, 2003 / VMC Leadership Development Day with Roy Matheson on The Supernatural Side of Ministry 8:30 am-3:59 pm at Westview Bible Church, 16789 Pierrefonds Blvd, Pierrefonds (Montreal) Register by October 27 at 877-509-5060

Nov 15, 2003 / VMC Leadership Development Day with David Ralph (and Gord Martin) 8:30 am-3:59 pm at Oakridge Bible Chapel, 2250 8th Line, Oakville, ON Register by November 10 at 877-509-5060

Nov 19-21, 2003 / Next ... ? National Church Planting Congress Vancouver, BC More info: Murray.Moerman@outreach.ca Register at www.outreach.ca/next or call Dianne Boyle at 604-952-0050x313

Events recommended by VMC, sponsored by us and others.

40 DAYS OF PURPOSE

Our church experienced a wonderful renewal in the past year! We participated in a spiritual journey called "40 Days of Purpose" developed by Rick Warren of Saddleback Community Church in California.

But let me begin by telling you something about our church. Cambridge Community Church (CCC) started about 10 years ago with the encouragement and support of Gord Martin of Vision Ministries. Presently we have between 140 and 180 in attendance on Sunday morning. About 250-275 call CCC their church home. We have focused on reaching seekers, therefore most of our people have come to know the Lord while attending CCC. Our vision statement reads:

The vision of Cambridge Community Church is to reach its community with the Christian message of hope and to lead people into life-changing encounters with Jesus.

The program began on a Saturday night with a potluck supper, followed by a simulcast of the service at Saddleback, which included a message by Rick Warren. Each of the next five Sunday mornings, we preached on 1 of 5 purposes, responding to the question, "Why on earth am I here?" All our Life Groups followed the program, with a video and material supplied by Saddleback. Rick Warren's book, "The Purpose Driven Life" is divided into 40 daily readings for people to follow through the duration of the program. Everyone was given a "40 Days of Purpose" key ring and every week we were given a tag for the key chain with a memory verse related to the purpose being considered that week. The climax was Celebration Sunday. The auditorium was set up with tables - dinner theatre style. A continental breakfast was served.

Here's a summary of what happened during the 40 days:

- 8 people were baptized on Celebration Sunday, two teens and 6 adults.
- 3 people accepted Christ into their life during the campaign.
- Over 20 people who had never served before, signed up for a ministry.
- Over 80 people got involved in a life group.
- One new life group was added - giving 10 in total.
- Our numbers jumped from 140 people to 180 people during the campaign.
- On celebration Sunday we had 250 people celebrate with us.

Here are comments from some involved: "This campaign has been the highlight of my 15 years as a pastor. To see the ownership and spiritual growth has been nothing short of amazing. Story after story has overwhelmed me. The phrase from the song "We'll never be the same again" became the catch phrase." (Rob Heintz, Pastor)

"Thanks for all your efforts. The fair was a success for Children's Ministries as we got 2 volunteer caregivers in the Nursery and one teacher for the 4-5 year-old class. I really sense a lot of people finding ways they can serve Him."

"For me, the 40 Days of Purpose has served as my guide through days of grief. I open up that book (The Purpose Driven Life) only to read another daily devotional that helps me work out the sadness and leads me to look into my direction of purpose."

We found that people were keen to talk about their spiritual lives. They were so impacted by the program that they began inviting their friends and families. A couple who had not been in church for over a year came and brought a friend with them. Another couple who had not been out for a couple of months came back. They left with new-found excitement.

After the Ministry fair, we began a new program called "Celebrate Recovery". Some time later, with tears in her eyes, the coordinator of the program said, "It just keeps getting better every week. I can't believe it, it just gets better."

One participant told her story of growing up with abuse, being pregnant at 17, and the pain this has brought her. The story was a marvelous testimony of God's grace and healing. She said, "You have no idea how great it is to belong to a church family that is safe, where you feel free to tell your story like this." One person commented to her after, "You just told my life's story." God truly is a redemptive and restoring God! We bought 120 copies of Rick Warren's book. They were all gone quickly. When we tried to find more, none were available. We should have bought more but lacked the faith!

We followed up the campaign with Christmas and New Years messages entitled "How to enjoy a Purpose-Driven Christmas" and "Developing a Purpose-Driven Calendar." After Christmas we had a short preaching series titled "Our Purpose-Driven Church - Its Values and Mission." All in all, "40 Days of Purpose" brought the church to a new level of spiritual commitment. As a result, our motto for 2003 is "Pursuing Jesus with Passion and Purpose."

Joël Coppieters**Joël Coppieters**

joel.coppieters@sympatico.ca

Est-il possible de perdre quelque chose en le protégeant trop?

Un de mes bons amis m'a raconté l'histoire d'une de ses découvertes les plus tristes. Cette année-là à Noël, son frère et lui avaient tout deux reçu une petite boîte de bonbons de fantaisie qui avaient apparemment un goût incroyable. Son frère, qui était du style un peu goinfre, avait consommé sa boîte au complet en dedans de deux ou trois jours. Mon ami, lui, voulait faire durer le plaisir et se limitait à un bonbon par jour. Il gardait son trésor bien protégé dans le fond d'un tiroir et n'ouvrait la boîte que très rarement pour en prendre un à la fois. Graduellement, les bonbons du fond de la boîte ont commencé à durcir, à perdre leur forme et à coller ensemble. Un beau jour, mon ami a découvert que ses précieux bonbons qu'il avait tant voulu protéger étaient devenus une masse immangeable, dure et sans goût.

Vous arrive-t-il parfois de vouloir tant protéger quelque chose ou quelqu'un que vous l'étouffez?

En visitant nos assemblées, je me demande parfois si ce n'est pas exactement ce que nous avons fait avec le Repas du Seigneur. En effet dans une bonne quantité de nos assemblées, il semble y avoir une manque d'intérêt croissant pour ce que nous croyons pourtant être la réunion la plus importante de la vie de l'église. Dans certaines assemblées les assistants au Repas du Seigneur deviennent de moins en moins nombreux tandis que les autres réunions croissent. Et ceux qui viennent au Repas ne semblent pas prêts à participer.

Je croyais au début de ce phénomène que les jeunes chrétiens ne comprenaient tout simplement pas l'importance d'adorer Christ et de se rappeler de sa mort tel qu'il l'avait demandé. Mon premier instinct en tant qu'ancien fut d'en parler plus, d'enseigner sur le sujet, d'accoster les gens un à un pour leur parler de ce que je voyais comme une manque d'intérêt et d'appréciation pour le Seigneur et ce qu'il a fait pour nous. Mais plus je discute avec eux, plus je vois non pas une réaction contre l'adoration de Christ, mais un problème avec des styles de musique et des approches qui ne concordent plus avec la réalité et les attentes courantes.

Je dois admettre qu'à part quelques chansons, je ne suis pas particulièrement friand de la musique « western ». Un de mes amis m'a demandé un jour si j'aurais de la difficulté avec le Repas du Seigneur si chaque semaine il ne comprenait que des morceaux de musique western. J'ai dû admettre que malgré mon amour pour le Seigneur et mon désir de l'adorer, une réunion complète en style western semaine après semaine commencerait éventuellement à me taper sur les nerfs.

Oui, le Seigneur nous a demandé de se rappeler de sa mort, et de le faire régulièrement dans la fraction du pain, et je continuerai à défendre cette réunion d'adoration jusqu'à ma mort! Mais les écritures ne nous laissent très peu d'instruction sur le style musical, ni même sur la question de l'utilisation d'un instrument de musique. Y a-t-il vraiment quelque chose dans le Nouveau Testament qui nous dit que nous ne pouvons utiliser que des chants qui datent de plus d'un siècle et dont les paroles sont tellement différentes de notre français journalier qu'elles pourraient aussi bien être en latin? En ajoutant des restrictions additionnelles aux instructions du Seigneur, est-ce que nous ne tombons pas dans le panneau des Scribes et des Pharisiens qui ajoutaient à la loi? Mais pire encore, dans notre désir de protéger le Repas du Seigneur, avons-nous canonisé des règlements humains qui mettent une barrière devant les jeunes chrétiens que nous échaudons dans leur désir d'adorer le Seigneur?

Je suis convaincu que certains de nos efforts pour protéger le Repas du Seigneur à tout prix, mais dans la forme que nous voulons, ont en effet le résultat contraire. Avons-nous le courage de reconsidérer les détails de notre célébration du Repas du Seigneur à la lumière des Écritures, pas pour questionner la place centrale du Repas lui-même, mais pour réexaminer nos approches et voir si nous nous serions peut-être attachés à des formes humaines comme si elles étaient des directives bibliques? Cette célébration est tellement importante que nous devrions tout entreprendre pour la rendre aussi réelle que possible aux gens qui en ont tellement besoin.

Notes from friends...

Just had to say how much I relish getting TA; well worth the wait, and worth double the price! (I'll drop something in the mail, I promise).

Edwin Rix, Mississauga, ON

I've received, read and been refreshed by the electronic copy of thinking ahead.

Bob McCoy, Mystic, Connecticut

Please continue our mailing. We really enjoy getting thinking ahead. The articles are good (even Jay's).

Dorothy Arnold, Stouffville, ON



Keep thinking ahead...

We're glad to keep sending this newsletter, or to send it to others who are interested. We can mail a printed copy or put it in your e-mail inbox. If you can help with the costs of the printed copy, we think it takes about \$15/year to produce and mail - though we'll keep sending to anyone interested in receiving. But we appreciate knowing from time to time that we should keep it coming your way. So please drop a note to us to confirm that you want to continue to be on the receiving end. Send your or your friends' electronic or snail mail addresses to:

henriett@vision-ministries.org

or to:

thinking ahead

145 Lincoln Road

Waterloo, ON

N2L 4P3

Positions

Pastor of Congregational Care

Capilano Christian Assembly (CCA) in Edmonton, AB is seeking a Pastor of Congregational Care.

Qualifications include: A vital, transforming relationship with God that qualifies the candidate to be a godly role model for young adults and other congregation members. A passion for teaching, discipling and mentoring young adults. Counseling experience and other work experience. Strong leadership, communication, visioning and people skills. Strong administrative and organizational skills.

Responsibilities: The Pastor of Congregational Care responds to the Board of Elders and works with other CCA pastoral and administrative staff to provide pastoral care to young adults and to other congregation members. In that regard, he:

- disciples and mentors young adults and others from our congregation;
- acts as sponsor for College & Career activities;
- assists this age group with setting up their leadership and care structure (including small group Bible studies);
- mentors and advises Youth Group leaders;
- provides pre-marital counseling services as required;
- takes a regular turn in the preaching rotation;
- assists with a weekly small group Bible study

Applications should be sent to:

Greg Gurnett
9333 50th St. Edmonton, AB T6B 2L5
Ph: 780-469-7801 Fax: 780-461-9173

Senior Pastor

Woodside Bible Fellowship, a growing evangelical community church, invites applications for the position of Senior Pastor. Responsibilities of the Senior Pastor include regular preaching duties to a congregation of approximately 600 people between our two Sunday morning services. Excellence in leadership skills is required while serving as a mentor for the pastoral staff and shepherd for the congregation. The Senior Pastor will

work closely with the Board of Elders to prepare, plan and implement the long term vision and goals of Woodside. Candidates should be gifted preachers with proven leadership skills in a medium to larger-sized church. Meeting the biblical qualifications of an elder is mandatory and formal seminary training is preferred. Located in Elmira, Ontario, the ministry of Woodside is diversified, serving people in a steadily growing rural community along with many from Waterloo, one of the highest technological driven economies in Canada. Known as "a church to call home," Woodside has many active ministries to both young and old, an ongoing commitment to missions both near and far along with a strong reputation for teaching God's word.

Applications may be sent in confidence to the attention of:

Mr. Glen Kearns

Chair, Senior Pastor Search Committee

c/o Woodside Bible Fellowship

200 Barnswallow Rd, Elmira, ON N3B 3K2

Email: glenshel.kearns@sympatico.ca

We are always
aware of at least

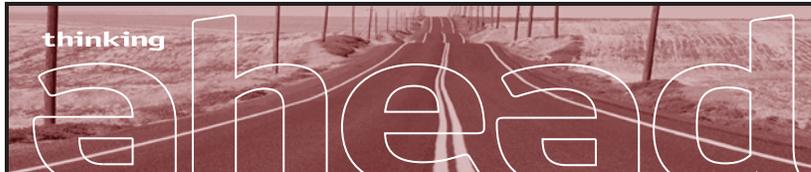
10

churches that
need staff

If you are looking for
a role, please contact:

Paul Hoffman

paul.vmc@rogers.com



145 Lincoln Road, Waterloo, ON N2L 4P3

RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED

Publications Agreement

Number: 40016262