

thinking

ahead

The Newsletter of Vision Ministries Canada

Volume 10, Number 1, September 2006

We haven't made too much fun of the editor lately, for his inability to get *thinking ahead* out on time. Mind you, we actually had this newsletter in people's hands when we intended to, three out of four times last publishing year. And of course eventually, no matter what else is happening (even a visit by the grim reaper), there gets to be enough pressure that Jay finally gets the job done (this finally happened in August). This little note also lets us remind you to make sure we know what you'd like. We're glad to keep sending the newsletter if you want it (but won't if you don't). Send us an e-mail (info@vision-ministries.org) or give us a call (**877-509-5060 toll free**) to let us know:



"You'll just have to take a seat and wait. I have a newsletter that has to go out."

- whether you want an electronic version or a regular mail version of *thinking ahead*
- that you don't want to receive thinking ahead any more
- that we should keep sending, or send copies to others who are interested

We're glad to have any assistance with mailing costs. Subscriptions are free, but \$15/year/recipient would be helpful.

A Holy Meal

Gordon Smith is the president of reSource Leadership International, a group that nurtures theological education in the developing world. Gordon was the Academic Dean at Regent College, at Canadian Theological Seminary, and at a seminary in the Philippines. He has been a pastor (with the Christian & Missionary Alliance); and is the author of a number of books, including: *The Voice of Jesus* (IVP, 2003) and *A Holy Meal* (Baker, 2005).

It's the subject of that last book that will be the focus when Gordon begins the latest series of Vision Ministries Canada Leadership Development Days in Ontario this November (more details on page 7).



GORDON SMITH

See *Meal* on page 3



Colin Heaton, Lifegate Bible Church, Windsor ON

2.

There were some big names like Stackhouse and Roebbelen at the **Thinking Shrewdly 2** event held in Waterloo in May. We much appreciated those guys, but we were just as happy to see and get advice from people shown here, plus many more leaders we know from across Canada. Vision Ministries is considering a third national gathering sometime in the next couple of years.



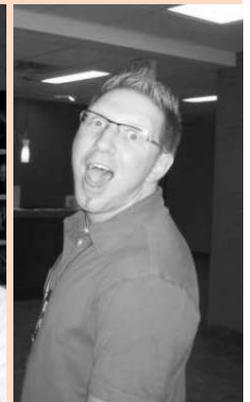
Nathaniel Wiseman, Lincoln Road Chapel, Waterloo ON
Rob Heintz, Cambridge Community Church, ON



Len Habermehl, Lincoln Road Chapel
Ming Peng Gong, Toronto China Bible Church
Doug Loveday, Community Bible Church, Lucan ON
Michel Pedneault, Assemblée Chrétienne de Cap-de-la-Madeleine, QC
Ron Seabrooke, Wallenstein Bible Chapel, ON
Shawn Cuthill, Bridlegrove Bible Chapel, Scarborough, ON



Trevor James, Southview Christian Fellowship, Edmonton
Doug Siewert, Bow Waters Community Church, Calgary
Jeanette Amundson, Emmanuel Christian Community, Richmond BC



Rob Abbott
The Gig, Kitchener ON



General Directions

Jay Gurnett
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I have some more thoughts arising out of the "late newsletter syndrome jab" on page 1 of this issue. Not because I think the jab is unjust (after all, I wrote it), but because it, and the demands of my work and life in general, plus some reading of course, have me doing lots more thinking about how we should live our lives so that the main thing will be to make the main thing the main thing.

geeze magazine (*holy mischief in an age of fast faith* – geezmagazine.org) out of Winnipeg, is coming up to a year old and is one of the periodicals I'm reading this year. My way of dealing with too many things to read is that apart from the *Reader's Digest* my inlaws give us, plus *Books and Culture*, I usually just subscribe to a couple of other periodicals for a year at a time. I'm not sure geeze will ever measure up to beyond (beyondmag.squarespace.com) which comes out of Calgary, and I guess is one other I always subscribe to (since the very beginning, deep in the mists of time, back in the mid-90's). But they're kind of cousin publications (I don't think kissing cousins – no actual connections): both have this strong awareness of God in Christ redeeming the world somewhere back of everything – but neither should be read by the faint of heart – nothing standard evangelical about either rag. geeze is nastier I think; beyond is less explicitly Christian. I also like beyond a little better, since it has rarely come out on time – making it a cousin of *thinking ahead* as well.

Anyway, in Issue 2 (Spring 2006) of geeze, on a single page titled "Accessible asceticism," there was a list of religious rules, inspired by ancient versions like the Rule of St. Benedict. Some very good suggestions in most of the 12 "chapters" of the geeze rules, but the first two particularly caught me when I read them back in May:

CHAPTER 1. *On the nature of material goods that enter our lives.* Let simplicity and function be our guide. Beauty in usefulness; usefulness in beauty. Excess is cumbersome and tends to the ugly.

CHAPTER 2. *On the nature of each morning.* Days are numbered in increments of thousands, if we have the presence of mind to behold the moment, if even for a while. Pause before eating. Wait before leaving. Breathe upon stepping outside...

About the time I read those rules, my wife Margie, was reading one of Mark Buchanan's books. She told me Buchanan's story about a teenage kid that was brought to him for counselling, when Buchanan was still pretty-much a



"I could tell you the hidden things of God, but then I would have to kill you."

2nd Thoughts

Gord Martin
gord@vision-ministries.org



The Natural Tensions of Pastoral Leadership

There are *natural tensions* among the essential requirements of pastoral leadership. These tensions were already evident in first century churches. Paul chided the Corinthians along these lines when he said "*the eye cannot say to the hand, I don't need you*" and "*you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is part of it.*" But it seems so difficult to know just what our part of it is; where does the work of the hand begin and end? It makes so much sense when we read the passage, yet we have problems putting Paul's clear and simple teachings into practice. Those who are obviously gifted as teachers, pastors, leaders and evangelists value each other from a distance but when they are close up – they have trouble knowing or accepting where their influence should begin and be strongest and when it should be more limited and deferential. It's as if the right hand and the left don't trust each other or don't have the wisdom needed to cooperate!

in the spheres of leadership and people management or administration.

Caring, counselling, challenging
Now this is real ministry! Well, it is according to those with gifts of mercy, pastoring, shepherding, encouragement and prophecy. Ministry is about people, being with them, helping them and addressing their real life issues; dealing with people. Do those with these real ministry gifts actually need those plodding detailed thinking teachers? Those over-organizing and nit-picking administrators? Those evangelists who make everything sound so simple? May those with these gifts be silently saying "We have no need of you others?"

We have no need of you others?

Leading, directing, managing
Here we have the real overseers and leaders of the church. They are the ones who can "*see the unseen, understand the times*" and know what the church should do. They are the natural visionar-

ies who can legitimately see what could and probably should be done and are able to communicate what they see to others so that they too can believe that this is the path to take. These leaders are especially valuable when they team up with administratively gifted people-managing types who can take those broadly stroked dreams and fill in the multiple gaps so that the dreams and visions can actually become reality. They ensure that things are done decently and in order. Those with these gifts are most likely to appreciate the full range of giftedness in others. Without both of these people it's almost impossible to launch a major change or new direction for a church.

Teaching, disciple making

It might be said that Teaching and Disciple Making is the essential or traditional pastoral gift and ministry role. Those who want to be pastors typically go to a Bible college or seminary to receive extended formal training so that they have the knowledge and capacity to "*teach others also*". In fact if you were to ask Bible teachers or pastors when they feel they are most obviously leading, they would say, "When I am preaching or teaching". It may be that they are providing leadership in some respects while they are preaching, but this is probably not the kind that is needed to provide directional leadership for a congregation. In fact according to several pieces of research I have come across recently, only a third or less of all pastors are actually gifted

Tensions from page 2

It's what helps new churches get started, building projects get done, new ministries launched, daughter churches birthed, etc. So, these are the real pastoral leaders! Right?

Evangelizing, growing

Evangelists don't have to ask anyone about what matters most. It's so obvious. If this calling isn't heeded nobody else will have anything to do! This is about the great commission after all. Read the book of Acts! And those who are gifted as evangelists sometimes can teach, care and lead if they have to. They may not see the need of it as much as others but they can do what actually needs to be done.

So, what should we do?

1. Before we do anything we should understand that the basic dangers are in over or under emphasizing the value of our contribution and that of others to the body. Not a small item!
2. We need to know which gifts we have and in what spheres we function most fruitfully. And it's very helpful to have honest feedback from others when assessing ourselves.
3. We need to know also what gifts we don't have and learn to appreciate others that do have them.
4. We must learn to lead without undue fear in our areas of strength and follow deferentially in the spheres of our liabilities. It takes great Holy Spirit courage to do the first, and wonderful Holy Spirit humility to do the second! Don't be afraid.
5. If you do not have all the necessary gifts your team needs for the challenge you are facing at the moment, then look for help. It's true that God sometimes stretches people beyond their normal capacity but it's probably more often the case that he uses each person in just the way he gifted and designed them.
6. Leadership teams must find a way to identify the gifts and roles for each of their members. And – they must clearly give each team member permission to lead in their area of strength.

People can lead without leadership and administrative gifts – but not very far! That is to say: teachers, evangelists, mercy givers, encouragers and prophets can provide some leadership – but primary leadership and administration does have to come from people who have those gifts.

But in order to truly flourish, we must find a way to overcome the natural tensions that exist among these gifts. It's not about a formula. It is about giving the time it takes to know each other, learning to walk together, sometimes testing and challenging each other – but always being committed to each other and to a strong common determination to advance the kingdom of the King of Kings!

WITH GRATITUDE

I suspect that only a few of our readers (perhaps my brother Greg Gurnett and brother-in-law Keith Tomalty who have the same obsession with getting rows of chairs exactly straight), ever read the column on the far right of this page. Most normal people skip the names and addresses and tiny details in most of life.

But since we started publishing *thinking ahead* in 1997, we've included in that column a list of good people from across Canada, who allowed us to use their names as members of our **Council of Reference**. Names came and went depending on life circumstances, and all who have ever been on the list we still consider good friends. But we've come to the point where we think they shouldn't have to take any more responsibility for us. However we wanted to publish their names once more, remind our readers that to some extent you can judge people by their friends, and give this final word of thanks for their ongoing support, to:

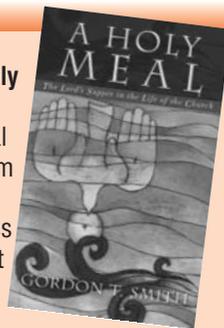
Bill Armerding, Tom Cowan, David Knight, Ted McKellar, Bill McRae, Greg Paul, Hugh Rodger, Fernand Saint Louis, Steve Tulloch, Geoff Tunnicliffe, Rod Wilson.

Meal from page 1

The day-long seminar titled **A Holy Meal: Celebrating the Lord's Supper Today** will take the "usual format". On a Saturday from 9 am through 4 pm, there will be four sessions, opportunities to discuss and interact with Dr. Smith, short reports about interesting new things happening in southern Ontario churches, free lunch and coffee breaks with lots of time to connect.

Gordon's sessions will remind us why the Lord's Supper is so important, and then discuss bringing change to classic practices, the Lord's Supper and evangelism, the matter of mystery.

Of course one of the things that keep many of the churches VMC knows from becoming "generic white bread evangelical churches" has been their stress on the person and work of Christ, celebrated through the "breaking of bread". We're anticipating that Gordon's thoughtful reflection, (and perhaps his different tradition - though of course no part of the Church owns the Lord's Supper), will refresh leaders, developing leaders, and "other tenacious servants of Jesus" in the local churches that will come along to the November event, and similar events across Canada.



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know-it-all young pastor. The young man was rude and disrespectful and just generally angry about everything. His mother, a drug addict, had rejected him twice I think, put him in other people's hands knowing that she couldn't care for him herself.

Buchanan didn't know what to say, but felt that God told him to tell the story of Solomon and the baby with two mothers. As he finished, he asked the boy which mother he thought really loved the baby. The answer of course was "the one who gave him up." I remember Margie reading me the description of the com-

plete change in the young man as the words sunk in. He suddenly saw things differently, and that dramatically changed his whole attitude about his life.

I wish you could hear the tune as well, but listen to the words of Bruce Cockburn's song "Child of the Wind" (from his exceptional album, "Nothing But a Burning Light"):

Little round planet
In a big universe
Sometimes it looks blessed
Sometimes it looks cursed
Depends on what you look at obviously
But even more it depends on the way that you see



Now, before I pull this all together, I want you to read a letter that George W. Murray wrote to Books and Culture which published it last March/April. Dr. Murray is the president of Columbia International University in Columbia, South Carolina (I once visited a former student of mine during the two years he was a mormon missionary in that town – but that's another story). CIU has a Bible College, a Graduate School and a Seminary, and a wise president – that's how it looks to me. He was writing in response to the first of a series of articles attempting to answer the question "How can followers of Christ be a counterculture for the common good?" A key question for me these days, and Lauren Winner had suggested one reasonable answer. I'm going to take the space to give you Murray's whole letter.

Lauren Winner's first Christian Vision Project article ["Sleep Therapy," January/February] is highly countercultural, not only to the culture at large but also to the evangelical subculture. Ironically, my wife and I are in a significant leadership role as president and first lady of one of our country's respected institutions of Christian higher education in part BECAUSE we have violated the adequate sleep principle most of our adult lives, she at the end of the day (a "night person") and I at the beginning of the day (a "morning person"). And our violation has been for the purpose of productive Christian work.

I have been the CEO of three evangelical Christian organizations, and during the search process in each case, I submitted a position paper clearly describing my chronic failure to observe the biblical "sabbath" principle of rest. Not ONE of those three search committees ever called me on my failure. In fact, my position paper probably helped secure my CEO role in all three instances because those committees concluded they were going to get their money's worth of work out of me (which they have).

My hardworking post-Depression parents taught me a work ethic for which I am forever thankful, but my thinking about work and rest has evolved over the years, especially as informed by the Bible's teaching. I used to

think that sleep was something you could do only AFTER all the work was done (a futile assumption). Then, I discovered that sleep was something I needed to do IN ORDER TO get the work done (a great improvement). Now, I am discovering that sleeping is something you do as AN ACT OF FAITH that God is getting the work done (yes, even without our help). George MacDonald once said that sleep is God's contrivance for giving us the help he cannot get into us when we are awake.

Initially it was disconcerting for my hardworking "night person" wife and her hardworking "morning person" husband to read this admonition from God's Word: "In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling" (Psalm 127:2). But gradually we are seeing the divine countercultural wisdom of that indictment because of the words that immediately follow in that same verse: "for while they are sleeping He provides for those He loves." I think we will be shocked on Judgement Day to find out how much of our hardworking productivity will be destructible "wood, hay, and straw" and how little will be indestructible "gold, silver, and costly stones." One factor that will determine the difference will be how much we practiced the countercultural "sleep of faith".

George W. Murray, President
Columbia International University
Columbia, South Carolina

So what does this all mean?

We moved again in May – third new house in two years. Bought a place that needed to be completely renovated – we're nearly finished the job as I'm writing this. Of course I was busy already before we added the renovation into our lives, so that even my workaholicism was challenged by the giant list (still a giant list) of things to do. One result was postponing this issue of **thinking ahead**.

The cartoon back on page 2 talks about the hidden things of God. My growing sense is that the material I just dumped on you includes some of the hidden things of God; though you are in no danger from me, now that I've told you this. I'm even hoping that some of us not only won't be killed, but can begin to live better, having learned these interconnected truths:

1. **A non-materialistic simplicity**, simplicity, simplicity, has to be better for most of my friends who are reading this, including particularly those in full-time ministry.
2. **An objective seeing**, a clear view of this little green planet, that gives us the right perspective on our work, and the pressures of life, and the value of relationships, etc. will certainly enrich our lives.
3. **A true practise of Sabbath**, entering into the rest of God with the faith that he can do so much more, if we'd just stay a little out of the way, could revolutionize our ministries.



Some of you will have already figured out that I've been writing this mostly for myself. You're right, of course. But over the years I've learned that generally the things that trouble me also cause difficulty for my brothers and sisters.

Lord, give us the grace to change.



Church Plant Updates

Authenticity and the Environment at the new site

Forestview Church Without Walls Hamilton

There are a lot of similarities between two congregations we know well in Oakville and Hamilton, Ontario. There should be similarities, since the two congregations are “parts” of one local church, Forestview Church Without Walls. But this is a church that has decided to grow and impact more of Canada through a “multi-site model.”

Most Canadian churches still have just one congregation, even if it might meet in two or more services. A multi-site or multi-congregational church on the other hand, sees its separate gatherings as distinct sub-congregations of one church. The philosophy of ministry and theology, and many other things are the same but the congregations can look differently and do some different things because they are separate congregations with separate people, gifting, freedom to develop.

Forestview always had a desire to be a church that planted churches. Pastor Mike Stone and Youth Pastor Chris Wignall and other Forestview leaders had been talking about how, where, when, and who for 4-5 years. Eventually the time came when some Forestview families living in the west end of Hamilton started to say that driving to Oakville was not ideal. When the Forestview leaders looked around that part of Hamilton, it appeared that there was need for a vibrant, active, established evangelical congregation. The decision was made to send Chris Wignall as the pastor of this new group, and the official kick-off was on March 26, 2006. Chris brought along his wife Kristen Brittain and 3-year old Benjamin (younger son Ian was born June 10), as members of a core group of about 25 people. This was a smaller core than the group had hoped for, but Chris and Kristen grew up in and know this community well, and Chris says that regardless, they’re staying.

Chris feels that there are significant advantages to the multi-site model. The existing infrastructure of people and prayer and finances makes many things easier. Among them is the simple reality that the pastor wasn’t just airlifted out of nowhere. But in addition, the new congregation has access to (among other things):

1. A full teaching team of approximately a half dozen. Chris does about 50% of the teaching in west Hamilton, but others visit regularly.
2. Youth pastor, children’s ministry director, community ministry director, administrator, etc. Although there are not many kids, and no youth at this point, all of these people are at least available in coaching roles.
3. Worship Team – Forestview Hamilton does have a distinct worship team, but is able to draw in pinch hitters as necessary.

At least two of Forestview Hamilton’s values are somewhat unique from the Oakville congregation. Many at Oakville would share the values, but they’re very high on the list in Hamilton. The group is committed to **the Environment** – working with Hamilton Eco-Network for example, to co-sponsor an environment film festival this year. And they very much want to be **Authentic** – in their teaching, music, greeting, etc. Chris suggests that when this group reaches a point of tension between excellence and authenticity, that they intend to always choose authenticity.

So that’s a little of how it looks here near the beginning of the next version of Forestview Church Without Walls. Lots of strengths of being bigger, some strengths of being smaller, some fresh distinctives, and challenges, of being a new congregation. Keep them in your prayers.



Chris Wignall in the thick of things at the opening Sunday of Forestview Hamilton.

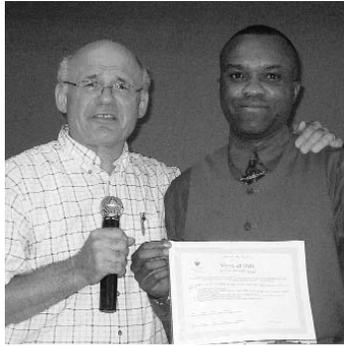
PRAYING for church plants

New churches need people praying for them. So we print and re-print this list of the groups we know best and have had some hand in getting off the ground, so that none of us will forget them. We also intend to never forget that *It is the Spirit who gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing.* If you would like to have regular prayer requests from planters delivered to your e-mail inbox, contact Allan Poyntz at allan@vision-ministries.org

- 1992** 1. Cambridge Community Church, Cambridge, ON
Rob & Helen Heintz, Dave & Gladys McClurkin
- 1994/1998** 2. Elim Bible Fellowship, Arkona, ON
Jonathan & Janine Ferrier
- 1996** 3. New Hope Community Church, Waterloo, ON
Steve & Deb Tulloch
- 1997** 4. The Bridge, Bancroft, ON - John & Flo Coles
5. Quinte Bible Chapel, Belleville, ON
Ken & Mary Lou Wiles
- 1998** 6. Bethany Gospel Chapel, Regina, SK (replant)
- 1999** 7. Brant Community Church, Brantford, ON
Andy & Theresa Flatt
8. Strome Community Church, Strome, AB
9. Orillia Community Church, Orillia, ON
Lawson & Karen Murray
- 2000** 10. Grace Multicultural Community Church,
Edmonton, AB - Dawit & Seble Isaac
11. Comerstone Church, Eiderslie, PEI
Rusty & Vanessa Fulp
12. Community Bible Church Ilderton, Ilderton, ON
Scott & Esther Dakin
- 2002** 13. Bow Waters Community Church,
Calgary, AB (replant) -
Doug & Kari Siewert
14. Heavenly Light, Toronto, ON
Yonatan & Bethlehem Hiruy
15. Lifegate Bible Church, Windsor, ON
Colin & Ruth Heaton
- 2003** 16. Southview Christian Fellowship,
Edmonton, AB - Stan & Becky King
17. Elnora Bible Fellowship, Elnora, AB
- 2004** 18. Toronto China Bible Church
(in North York), Toronto, ON -
Ming Peng Gong & Tian Mei Wang
19. LifeSpring Christian Fellowship,
Waterloo, ON - Bruce Mills
20. *church without borders*, Vancouver, BC
Dan & Sharon Williams
- 2006** 21. Elmira Community Church, Elmira, ON
David and Carolyn Slomka
22. The Gig, Kitchener, ON -
Rob & Bec Abbott
23. **Forestview Church Without Walls
Hamilton ON,
Chris Wignall & Kristen Brittain**
24. The Gathering, Stirling ON,
Peter & Simone Robinson
25. Viens et Vois la Cité des Merveilles
Toronto ON
Claude Katanga
26. Mill Creek Christian Fellowship,
Edmonton, AB
Jack & Lisa Teigen

Viens et Vois la Cité des Merveilles

Here's **Gord Martin** presenting **Claude Katanga** with an Agreement of Association with Vision Ministries Canada. Claude is the pastor of the Toronto French-speaking multi-cultural church plant that has that long French name (VeVICdM – see above). We're excited about the outreach potential and multi-ethnic approach (they'll even speak a little English) of this young congregation. More info next issue.



Gord Martin and Claude Katanga

Prayer and more prayer

If you're a regular reader of *thinking ahead*, you may be getting fed up with so many reminders of our need for people to commit to pray regularly for church plants. **Allan Poyntz** asked me recently why we limited people to praying for church plants, when we also need lots of prayer for VMC staff, other ministry areas, finances, vision and direction. Then he wrote me this little revision of one of our "appeals":

INTERCESSORS, PRAYER GROUPS

We value the support of lots of pray-ers for the ministry of Vision Ministries Canada and its church plants. If you or your group would like our monthly Prayer Update to pray through, contact Allan Poyntz at allan@vision-ministries.org or 877.509.5060.

Allan is right. Please be in touch. We so much value this kind of support.

Stackhouse on line

There was a time following VMC leadership development days and similar events, when you had to pony up with your \$20, and then wait for a month or more while we carried audio tapes back to Waterloo, got them copied by a faithful volunteer (thanks for all the work **Vic Cowie**), and snail-mailed them back out.

But the world has changed, and we're not too far behind it. Now, for no money at all, and pretty quickly, you can go listen to talks from recent events on line. So, for example, the excellent words John Stackhouse



John Stackhouse

brought to church leaders at **Thinking Shrewdly 2** in May (that's a picture of John at the event), can be found at: <http://www.vision-ministries.org/events.html> Or you can go to the Lambrick Park Church site, and listen to what **Roy Matheson** said at the leadership development day in Victoria in February, at this address: http://recordings.lpcsermons.com/by_speaker.php And there will be lots more to come.

Big days at Elnora

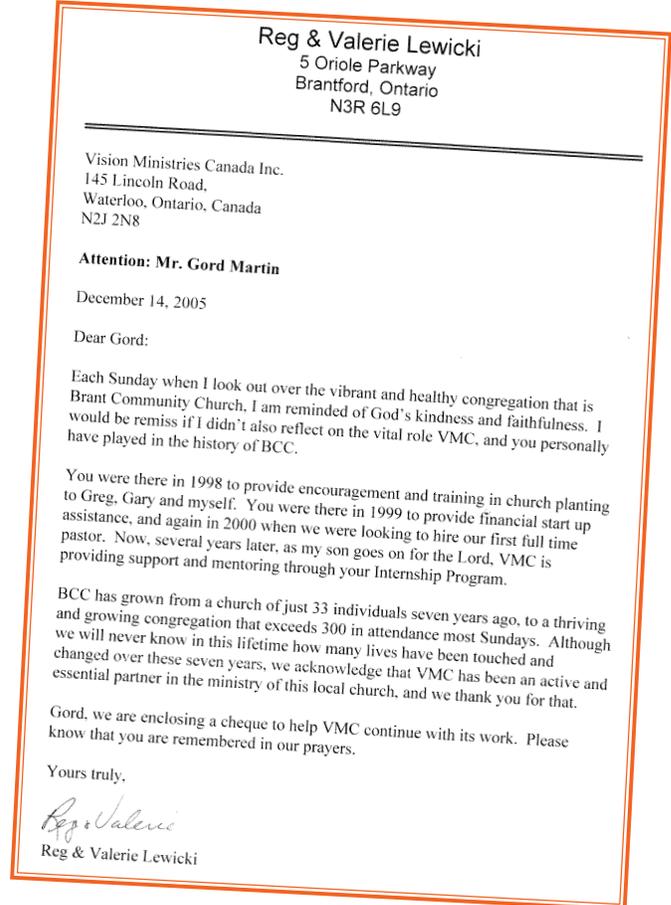
Had a couple of nice reports this past spring from the little community church in Central Alberta that calls itself Elnora Bible Fellowship. That eclectic group of folks with all kinds of denominational and non-denominational roots, in a village with less than 300 residents, usually numbers 25-30 for their Sunday gathering. But their Sweetheart Banquet in February – had 72 in attendance; and the Easter Sunrise event out at Salem Acres (a nearby camp/retreat centre closely connected to EBF), had 68 attend – including only a few EBF regulars.

Wayne Wooden, one of the Elnora elders, gave an outreach talk at the February event, and church members took pictures of every couple in attendance, then hand-delivered them to all the new acquaintances.

Sunrise at the Easter morning event was at "the point." Not many more beautiful corners in that beautiful province than this location above where a deep ravine and the steep Red Deer River valley come together. Hard not to have a little hope in your soul as the sun rises and the great news is declared.

We get letters

We rarely publish the letters we get from readers. We did it more in the old days when we were excited to know that anyone was reading. But the letter shown here looks exactly like one that **Reg and Valerie Lewicki** sent us quite a few months ago now. Gord Martin didn't show it to me right away, and I left it in a pile for a while. But it gives a good picture of a number of the steps along the way in the development of one VMC church plant. Plus it made us feel pretty good.



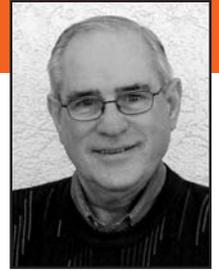
Vancouver Connect Sunday

The Vancouver regional vision network – up to about 20 pastor/worker friends of ours in the lower mainland of British Columbia, representing about a dozen local churches mostly in Vancouver, but also including folks from Powell River and Pemberton, tried something a little different this spring. Four groups (it was almost quite a few more) chose the same day to exchange key preachers.

This network has been gathering pretty faithfully 2-3 times/year for a number of years. **Mark Anderson**, who does most of the work of pulling people together, suggested that it was time to stop just talking about network, and do something. Mark described the goal as "to get to know each other a little bit and develop the sense that there are other churches out there that not only are like us, but that also like us (and care enough to pray for us)."

The churches that participated were glad they did, and there are hopes that this might happen even annually. The attached picture shows Mark visiting **Cates Hill Chapel** on Bowen Island. **David Anderson**, pastor of Cates Hill is sitting on the left side of the picture. Mark (no relation) Anderson, is next to him. Mark is more often found in the pulpit at **Marineview Chapel**.





TEAM WORK-TOGETHER EVERYONE ACHIEVES MORE

A healthy church is the aggregate of a whole lot of teams. The more synergy within and between teams, the healthier the church becomes. Some churches actually use the word “team” to describe the people that make church programs happen. They use terms like “Leadership Team” to describe the elders ... or “Finance Team” to identify those who oversee the financial integrity of the church ... or “Drama Team” to describe those who creatively plan drama for services.

The word itself, “team” reminds us that no one individual strongly dominates the other members – that everyone who serves is part of something bigger than themselves. No one is a Lone Ranger. This is partly because pooled wisdom is better by far than individual wisdom. Furthermore the team concept helps us live out the belief that each and every one of us, though very different, have spiritual gifts and abilities to bring to the table.

Something extraordinary happens when you are in a team that is working right. You leave team meetings with a sense of achievement, that somehow you are making a difference in the lives of other team members – a feeling that you can never have when working alone. Some churches acknowledge the value of their teams by considering them to be individual groups within the small group ministry. Pastoral care and nurture happens at team meetings. And what better place to grow to be like Jesus than in the environment of serving God with others in a team of people who love Him and love you too?

But what makes a good team work? What do healthy team dynamics look like? How can you and I be great team players?

Here are just a few qualities you might expect in good team members.

1. Team players express opinions easily but are not aggressive. They do not dominate nor are they passive; they are not afraid to express an honest idea. Team meetings become environments that encourage the free expression of ideas and opinions. They become breeding grounds of creativity. Teams constantly think “How can we do church better?”

2. Team players understand the difference between critiquing and criticizing. The first is positive and constructive. The latter is negative and destructive. Critiquing builds the other person up. Criticizing tears the other person down. Good team members come to team meetings eager to learn and willing to share and absorb new ideas. They live out Jesus’ example of respecting the feelings of others.

3. Team players maintain unity within the team by keeping their eyes on the team’s goals and how they fit into the overall vision of the church. As one writer said, “the team shines with a single beam of light.” Good team members stay on the same page and good teams stay on the same page as the church as a whole.

Can you imagine a church made up of great teams that are committed to serving the greater good and building up one other? Think what it might be like if you served on a team where your opinions mattered and you were making a difference for the Kingdom of God; where fresh ideas were being used to reach people for Jesus. That’s what it’s like in a healthy church and no one ever complained about being part of a healthy church.



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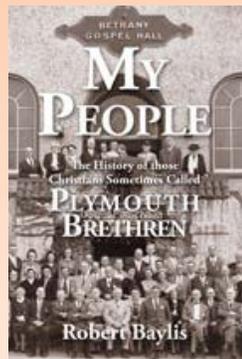
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Brethren Stuff

Here are a few quick reminders about Plymouth/Christian Brethren related matters.



- Gospel Folio Press has reissued **Robert Baylis'** history of mostly North American brethren, **My People**. A positive but honest presentation, and including lots of pictures, addenda, etc. It's \$29.99, and Vision Ministries keeps copies in stock. We sell for 10% off retail (tax included), plus mailing costs. Contact Henrietta at info@vision-ministries.org or 877.509.5060. We're anticipating seeing Bob's new history of the same group of churches in the San Francisco area: **The Brethren by the Bay**
- We hear from **Neil Summerton** in Britain, that a new history of the Open Brethren in Great Britain and Ireland is now available from Paternoster. Harold Rowdon, who also wrote an authoritative history of the Brethren movement, says that Tim Grass' **Gathering to his Name** is "a superb account ... outstanding for its breadth of coverage, depth of research, sympathetic yet objective stance, and clarity of presentation." No word yet about availability in Canada.
- Another interesting reminder from Dr. Summerton: **The International Brethren Conference on Mission** is held every four years. It brings together national leaders in the Brethren movement from as many different countries as possible, for fellowship, spiritual reflection, renewed experience of the Lord, exchange of information and discussion of matters of mutual interest. Gord Martin from Vision Ministries attended the IBCM3 event in Romania in 2003. IBCM4 is planned for June 25-July 1, 2007 in Wiedenest, Germany. More information at www.ibcm.net
- And IBCM is the parent body of the **Brethren Educational Network** which has the goal of encouraging training and leadership development in the worldwide Brethren movement of churches, and of linking people across the world who want to see improvements in spiritual and practical leadership in these churches. A key aim is to post a wide range of materials on their website at www.benrff.org which may be helpful for training and leadership development in churches – including course materials, booklists, papers reflecting on training needs and approaches, links to other relevant sites, and so on. Worth having a look at this developing site.

Life Coach

There's an even better picture of **Mark Anderson** on his website www.moretolifei2.com than the one on page six.

I'm pushing people in Mark's direction pretty regularly these days, since he isn't only the pastor at Marineview Chapel in Vancouver, but is a pretty exceptional life coach. People in ministry (or anyone else for that matter), who are looking at change in their lives, either figuring out the next step in their career, or changing priorities to have more time for family and friends, and who are open to involving a spiritual component in that process, should have a look at that site, have a talk with Mark or contact him at mpcj@telus.net

Youth Pastor for Richvale Bible Chapel

Richvale Bible Chapel is seeking a full-time youth pastor to teach, challenge, inspire and mentor the youth of our Church family on their Christian journeys, and to reach out to the larger community to win others for Christ.

Who We Are: *We are an evangelical community oriented church, with Brethren roots, in Richmond Hill, a northern suburb of Toronto. We are a multi-generational Church family. Our Sunday morning attendance is approximately 80-90 adults, 15 children and 30 youth. Additionally, a larger number of youth regularly attend our weekly youth social activities.*

Who You Are: *You are a godly, dynamic individual with a passion for youth and previous youth ministry experience. You have a vibrant and personal Christian faith, with a strong Biblical knowledge and a Christian worldview. You have excellent interpersonal, teaching and counselling skills, with a focus on building relationships with youth. You have a desire to be part of a Church family and to work in team-oriented ministry situation. In this position, you will be accountable to our pastoral staffperson and team of elders and will work with the existing team of youth sponsors. If you are interested in being part of a caring Church family and have a desire to serve God in this vital ministry please contact:*

Youth Pastor Search Committee

Richvale Bible Chapel

24 Oak Avenue, Richmond Hill ON., L4C 6R7

Tel: 905-889-7073, Fax: 905-889-7387 or pchew@richvale.ca

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