



EMMAUS

A NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS OF THE CCC

MAY 2005

Biotech ethics framed in faith

Becoming Human, a new booklet from the Faith and Witness Commission of the Canadian Council of Churches, has received enthusiastic reviews from member churches of different traditions.

The 16-page resource is intended to help church study groups and school classes reflect on issues raised by biotechnology--genetic engineering of plants, cloning of humans, destruction of the ozone layer, manipulation of the environment and stem cell research.

"The Commission members belong to many different Christian families," the booklet says. "We have different traditions, different ways of thinking, understanding, speaking and praying. Yet as we reflect together on such questions we find that we all approach them from the same source. . .that fundamental sense of who we humans are before the face of God, is shared by all."

Many churches have ordered the colour booklet, subtitled *On Theological Anthropology in an Age of Engineering Life*. The Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec ordered copies for distribution to all its 366 churches.

"These are important issues for people in our churches to be talking about," says executive minister Dr. Ken Bellous. "I see this as an important resource for pastoral leaders to stimulate discussion on issues that affect us all. . .to help us be the salt and light wherever we are."

The Rt. Rev. Yuri Kalistchuk, Archbishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada, was struck by the attractive design of the pamphlet, with "lots of symbols, both ancient and modern".

"The people who wrote it were able to balance, I wouldn't say the points of view, but the ambiance, the feeling," of the different traditions in the CCC.

In an interview in *The Catholic Register*,

Father Damian MacPherson, director of the archdiocese of Toronto's ecumenical office, says *Becoming Human* might get ordinary Christians talking about biotechnology in more sophisticated terms than just feelings and opinions.

The booklet is the result of three years of work, writing, exchanging and discussing papers on theological anthropology and finding common themes.

The booklet can be downloaded from the website www.ccc-cce.ca or ordered by phone (416) 972-9494 or e-mail: admin@ccc-cce.ca free of charge. You pay shipping.

A new pamphlet from the CCC's Faith and Witness Commission urges readers to become informed about science, technology and genetics.



Ecumenical pastoral care needed after disasters

A concept of the type of pastoral care that should be available in emergencies in Canada is emerging from the National Advisory Group on Emergency Planning.

During disasters such as forest fires, ice storms, hurricanes and floods, plane crashes, oil fires, major collisions or terrorist attacks, well-planned and open ecumenical pastoral care organized locally in collaboration with other faith groups should be available, the group suggests. It would take place in cooperation with various levels of emergency measures organizations.

While the national advisory group would facilitate communication and learning, the real work would take place in trained local groups, according to a draft report on protocols and terms of reference.

The national advisory group was set up following a presentation by the Chaplain General of the Canadian Armed Forces to the Governing Board of the Canadian Council of Churches in November, 2001, in the wake of the Swiss Air crash off Peggy's Cove and the events of Sept. 11, 2001. The group reports to CCC through the Commission on Faith and Witness and works with the Chaplain General's office.

It's envisioned that local ecumenical groups would be trained to work with local and federal agencies to ensure delivery of pastoral care to those in distress. They might also provide translation, help meet cultural, ethnic or religious needs such as diet and connect victims of a local emergency with church persons in other communities.

"The pastoral caregiver would walk with the victim and those caring for the victim," according to Eileen Scully, convenor of the national advisory group. "Pastoral care means bringing comfort, offering prayer, assisting them to pray if they so desire, helping them to find meaning and hope in their situation and helping them to be aware of God's presence."

Pastoral care would aid the victim while respecting the individual's faith tradition. If the victim does not profess belief in God, that would be respected. Pastoral care would never be forced upon anyone and would not be contingent on the victim making any kind of statement of faith. "Attempts to proselytize or convert would not be permitted in this emergency assistance."

In advance of an emergency, local groups on emergency pastoral care would identify the resources of local faith communities—people who worship in and beyond congregations, schools, seminaries, denominational headquarters, pastoral counseling centres and retreat centres. The local groups would find out who provides services locally in emergency—police, firefighters, band councils, local government and service groups, for example. And they would reach out to other faith groups in the hopes of collaboration.

The national advisory group is approaching provincial and territorial governments with the intent of signing agreements with as many levels of government as possible to ensure provision of pastoral care services.

Members of the National Advisory Group on Emergency Planning are: Eileen Scully (Anglican Church of Canada), Nora Baltayan (Armenian Holy Apostolic Church Canadian Diocese), Lt.-Col. Sylvain Maurais (Canadian Forces Chaplain Branch), Rev. Herman Keizer (Christian Reformed Church in North America--Canada), Rev. Don Muir (Presbyterian Church in Canada), Jim Ferguson (The Salvation Army), Father Ihor Kutash (Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada). The Rev. Elizabeth Wagschal of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada represents the Faith and Witness Commission. Dr. Mary Marrocco, associate secretary of that commission, is the CCC staff person.

The group is seeking representation from other CCC member churches. Persons experienced in pastoral care and crisis counseling, those who know their church and its resource people and those with an interest in this work should speak to their denominational representatives on the commission about becoming involved. ❖

National interfaith service marks tsunami disaster

OTTAWA--A national memorial service in January mourning victims of the tsunami disaster in Asia marked the return of religion to national ceremonies of mourning in Canada.

For several years The CCC, the Canadian Forces Chaplaincy Branch, former CCC president Sen. Lois Wilson and others had been urging Ottawa to acknowledge the role of faith at such times. A service on Parliament Hill remembering those killed in the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks was notable for its exclusion of any mention of religion.

The CCC and others want those organizing such services to encourage faith leaders to speak according to their own traditions and in their own voices.

The Rev. Dr. Karen Hamilton, General Secretary of the CCC, sent a copy of the CCC's booklet, *Religious Ceremonies Involving More Than One Faith Tradition* to organizers of the January service.

Governor-General Adrienne Clarkson wrote to Dr. Hamilton thanking her for her insights regarding inter-faith ceremonies. "She is really thanking the Council for the booklet," Dr. Hamilton said. ❖

Emmaus will feature local stories of ecumenism in the pews. You're invited to tell us what is happening ecumenically in your community. Send us 100-250 words by e-mail or land mail and we'll share some of your stories with other Emmaus readers across Canada.

News Briefs:

CCC OPEN HOUSE

TORONTO--The Canadian Council of Churches is moving June 22 to 47 Queen's Park Cres. E., a site shared by the Toronto School of Theology and other vital ecumenical groups. Friends of the Canadian Council of Churches are invited to an Open House tentatively set for Sun. Oct. 2. For details, visit www.ccc-cce.ca.

MENNONITES WELCOMED

MISSISSAUGA--An official application by the Mennonite Church Canada for full membership in the CCC received enthusiastic unanimous approval from the Governing Board in November. The church has been an active observer in the CCC for many years.

BOOK A SPEAKER

TORONTO--The first-ever national Speakers Bureau has been launched by the Canadian Council of Churches. Speakers hail from across Canada, from Victoria to St. John's, Nfld. If you are seeking a person active in ecumenism to address an ecumenical conference or event, check the CCC website at

www.ccc-cce.ca for the box marked "Speakers Bureau" to look for possible speakers in your region.

COOPERATIVE MEETING

MONTREAL-- The May meeting of the Governing Board May 25-27 was organized in cooperation with the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism. Five CCC board members will preach in Montreal that Sunday.

LEADERS HONORED

HALIFAX--Two Canadians active in ecumenism were awarded honorary degrees from the Atlantic School of Theology Apr. 30. The Rev. Robert Mills of the United Church of Canada, acting general secretary of the CCC from 1995-97, co-chaired the Anglican-United National Dialogue of Canada and organized ecumenical festivals. The Rev Jean-Marc Laporte, Provincial Superior of the Jesuits of Upper Canada, served as president of Regis College and at the Toronto School of Theology. He was a member of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue of Canada.



(Photo Michael Swan, Catholic Register)

This year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity—a program the Faith and Witness Commission of the CCC facilitates in Canada—began in Toronto with an ecumenical evening service at the Anglican Cathedral Church of St. James. At the microphone is the Rev. Bill Osbourne, of the British Methodist Episcopal church, president of the Greater Toronto Council of Christian Churches. Among those offering prayers, but hidden in the photo, was CCC General Secretary the Rev. Dr. Karen Hamilton.

For the second year, Anglican and Lutheran pastors in Toronto exchanged pulpits with Roman Catholic pastors, this year at 14 churches. "People of good will are bringing Christendom back together," the Rev. Canon Judy Rois of Christ Church Deer Park, an Anglican congregation,

said in her sermon to the Roman Catholic congregation of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. "We cannot be content to remain apart when the Gospel cries out for unity."

During Lent in Ottawa, marking the 40th anniversary of the Pope's Decree on Ecumenism, Archbishop Marcel Gervais of Ottawa presided over a series of ecumenical services at Notre Dame Cathedral. He invited guest speakers from the Evangelical Lutheran, Anglican, United and two Orthodox churches.

ENCOUNTERS

Youth on pilgrimage

By ROB SHEARER

Imagine thousands of youth and young adults from across the Christian spectrum gathering to explore creativity, love, justice and service through discourse, worship, music and the arts.

From August 4 to 6, 2006 a campground and conference facility in Kitchener, Ont., will fill with young pilgrims and their friends and supporters in the ecumenical movement. Rooted in their traditions while respectfully engaging other expressions of Christian faith, they will, for three days, seek in pilgrimage to explore and live together the streams of the Christian faith.

This is the vision of Nidus.

As the mission statement of the festival puts it: "By bringing people together to share in a broad spectrum of expressions of Christian faith and being, we seek to further Christian unity in the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Can you imagine sounds of praise from early morning until late at night? How about artistic and musical expressions from across genres? What about learning from dynamic speakers and interactive workshops? Imagine sharing our stories around campfires, stories that challenge us to deepen our faith in the living God. Exciting!

"Nidus seeks to be pilgrimage," says the mission statement, empowering younger people to enter into a deeper, sustainable level of commitment and enthusiasm for their faith in Jesus Christ and developing a greater zeal for an engaged Christian life.

An organizing team facilitated through the CCC includes representatives from many CCC member churches and others, including Orthodox, Evangelical, charismatic,

peace, mainstream Protestant and Roman Catholic churches.

Nidus will provide a forum for people to explore their own traditions as well as share with those across the Christian spectrum. We want to disarm assumptions to better appreciate our ancient faith, rooted spiri-

**Nidus : An origin of change;
a breeding ground for new
ideas; a place of grief and joy;
a source of support and shar-
ing. A place where something
originates, develops
or is located.**

tual traditions and the emerging spiritual-cultural realities of younger Christians in a rapidly changing world.

We also seek to engage those without traditions and those curious about the Christian story of redemption.

Friends of the CCC gives Canadians a chance to stay in touch with the council while financially supporting its dynamic work. Individuals and congregations may choose to receive a periodic newsletter, CCC news releases and a list of publications. Donations over \$35 receive a charitable receipt. To become a Friend of the CCC phone (416) 972-9494 ext. 21 or request a form via e-mail.



The festival will encompass traditional and new worship, liturgy, art, music, talks, storytelling, contemplation, play and invitations to a lived faith.

As we gather one week before the World AIDS conference in Toronto, we'll have a special social concern element that will challenge pilgrims to engage an embodied faith through social action. We will also offer an ecumenical young adult leadership day Aug. 7 that will empower youth to be leaders in the ecumenical movement.

Plan to be there. Why not involve your church, ministry, artistic/musical group early? E-mail us at: nidus@sympatico.ca or call Rob at 416 972-9494 x25. Keep an eye on the CCC website for details.

(Rob Shearer is the Nidus Festival Coordinator with the CCC and lives and works in the Toronto Catholic Worker Community.)

How to reach us

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To learn more:

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