

POINT GREY INTER-MENNONITE FELLOWSHIP

web site: www.pgimf.org E-mail: info@pgimf.org

June 22nd, 2008

Welcome to Point Grey Inter-Mennonite Fellowship. Today our service will be led in worship by Karl Brown, in song by Erna Friesen, Lenora Pauls will accompany on the piano, and Helmut Lemke is your usher. Later we will hear from **Dr. Veronica Dyck** whose sermon is entitled Hagar: a Story of Justice & Compassion in the Wilderness, based on the passage from Genesis 16 and 21:8-21. *Although parents are requested to make their own arrangements for child care during the service if they feel their children don't wish to remain in the chapel during the service, we welcome your suggestions for church-provided child care if you feel your child is ready for entertainment or instruction from one of our many angels who are called to care.* Please join us in the lounge after the service for coffee and fellowship.

Last Sunday Dr John Klassen, (History Professor Emeritus, Trinity Western) spoke on the lectionary text, Genesis 18.1-15, "Reasons to Laugh". There are far too few examples of laughter recorded in scripture. Instead we are given stories of worry and suffering almost from the beginning of Scripture, when the existence and knowledge of evil is alluded to in the tale of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. . Seventh-century theologians added to this trend by encouraging Christians to search our souls for any possible unacknowledged sins, deal with them (by faith and works), and some evangelicals are still influenced by this type of thinking. However, God has always entered the world with forgiveness, grace and love, which gives us cause to laugh with joy. When Jesus comes much later, he declares (as did Proverbs) that God loves everybody, not just those who are good or have the right kind of faith (God sends rain on those who are good and those who are not.) Again, this is reason enough for joy and relieved laughter. Genesis 18 tells of Sarah's laughter (though the word in the original is quite flexible and its sexual connotations make it unusually difficult to understand). Although she had given Hagar to Abraham in order to help God by providing the family a son, God was not going to be denied the option already promised, and Sarah miraculously became impregnated, and when Isaac was born, Sarah said, "God has brought me laughter" despite her lack of faith (and Abraham's). The day's reading from Romans 5 looks at sin as 'that which pulls you down'. Adam somehow released this tremendous power of sin, but in Romans 5 we are told that we are saved, not by our faith (or good deeds) but by the faithfulness of Jesus (Toews argues this is the best translation/understanding of the passage). With all these examples in mind, showing how God works with everybody, in spite of their lives or paucity of faith, why do we, as the church, assert that certain individuals are not worthy to preach, minister or lead worship? The day's readings demonstrate this is not the way God views, approaches, or works with individuals. Thankfully God works around our weaknesses, thinking, faults and limitations - just as in Genesis. [JEK]

PGIMF News

Upcoming speakers

June 29	Rosie Perera	Spirituality and Aging
July 6	Brian Burtchett	Parables I - Compassion
July 13	Don Teichroeb	Parables II - Generosity
July 20	Ruth Enns	Parables III - Humility

RECORDING THE SERVICE

Please note that we now record the response time after the sermon. You are encouraged to share your thoughts as fully as you feel led with the proviso that no privacy can be guaranteed. The response time will not be posted to the website. You are encouraged to bring forth private issues during the time of sharing and prayer, which will continue to be not recorded.

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The Wider Church

MBMSI Pray today for Dave & Louise Sinclair-Peters, MBMS International workers in Thailand, as they disciple young believers in their Leadership Training Program. Pray that the Lord will continue to use The Life Center to draw Thais to himself.

MCC MCC has matched with CIDA all funds donated up til June 13th at the rate of 1:1 for an emergency water project in Myanmar (Burma) as well as for humanitarian work in China. Our aid is getting through! To support these efforts, make cheques payable to MCC BC and send to PO Box 2038 Abbotsford, BC V2T 3T8. Credit card donations can be made when you call (604) 850 6639 or 1 888 622 6337 or visit mcc.org/donate. Please mark your donations for either Myanmar or China.

MC Canada Annual Assembly Still seeking registrations for the Mennonite Church Canada Assembly (July 7-8) and the People's Summit for Faithful Living (July 8-10). Delegates are needed - please see Don if you are planning to go. Assembly Report Books, which include ministry activity updates, discernment materials, and financial information are now available on line at <http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/events/summit08/>.

You are invited to attend the gala Vancouver film premiere of the movie *Pete: Moving Man Made Mountains* presented by The Vancouver Festival Cinemas, held at The Ridge Theatre, 16th and Arbutus, with showtimes at 4:00, 7:00 and 9:00 pm on July 9th, 2008. The movie is the story of Pete Friesen, who, during his long career became the man who could move anything - any building, any size. See the story of his life, growing up in tough times on a small, poor farm, loving learning but destined never to go beyond Grade 8, who survived his father's bitterness and occasional brutality to become a gentle-hearted, but fiercely determined man. At the gala, the theme song of the picture will be sung by The Inspiration Singers Choir, conducted by Julie Blue, the film's composer. It will be a fun inspiring evening for us all. See more information on the movie at <http://www.petethemovie.com/>.

From last week's sermon a quote was requested

If we fix our eyes upon the place where the course of the world reaches its lowest point, where its vanity is unmistakable, where its groanings are most bitter and the divine incognito most impenetrable, we shall encounter there-Jesus Christ. On the frontier of what is observable He stands delivered up and not spared. In place of us all He stands there, delivered up for us all, patently submerged in the flood.

- Karl Barth, The Epistle to the Romans

The **Regent College** Free Lectures series continues next Monday, June 30 with Dr Bruce Waltke delivering his lecture *Wisdom in Shoe-Leather: A Lecture on Proverbs and Culture*. All lectures will be held in the chapel at Regent College and begins at 8:00 pm. Come early for a good seat.

Cdn MB Conference Don't miss **Gathering 2008!** July 10-12, 2008 at the Four Points by Sheraton Montreal Airport, Montreal QC. Cost: \$350 per person for late registration (includes breakfast and morning breaks on Friday and Saturday and lunch on Friday). Keynote Speakers: Bruxy Cavey, Eric Wingender and Patrice Nagant. You will also participate in "Experience Montreal", which will provide attendees with the opportunity to live God's call together through a variety of tours of Montreal. See the Canadian conference website at www.mbconf.ca/ and follow the links to Gathering 2008. All delegates will receive a two-page summary of the financial reports including Canadian Conference Financials, Pension Fund Financials, Stewardship Financials and Christian Press Financials. Accommodations: \$99 plus taxes per night (based on double or single occupancy). Register by mail to Gathering 2008, 1310 Taylor Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3M 3Z6, fax: 1-204-654-1865, online or by phone at 1-888-669-6575

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Urgent call to Intercession

Please note June 26 and 27 on your calendar. Mennonite World Conference (MWC) and Mennonite Church Canada are calling for prayer and fasting on those dates to support Zimbabweans as they face a tense run-off election on June 27. Dan Nighswander and Yvonne Snider-Nighswander, MC Canada Witness workers in South Africa, have been blessed by MC Canada to serve as deacons of the MWC community during that time. They will provide encouragement to Bishop Ndlovu, MWC president-elect and leader of the Brethren in Christ Church in Zimbabwe (BICCCZ), Bishop Ndlovu's family, pastors and others under stress.

Dan and Yvonne have specifically asked for prayers for wisdom during this time of uncertainty. Please also pray:

- that God will intervene in a visible way to end the violence and suffering that have afflicted Zimbabwe;
- that the churches of Zimbabwe will be signs of God's love and justice in the midst of this struggle;
- that those who have been intimidated will be able to exercise their right to vote without further threat;
- that election monitors will be permitted to play a credible role to assure integrity and lack of violence at polling stations;
- that the government in power will allow honest results to be reported;
- that, whatever the election results, the government in power will agree to come to the table with opposition political leaders, military and security forces, and church and civil society organizations to map out a workable path for the future of the country;
- that African and United Nations leaders will play a strong and clear role in pressing for the above outcomes.

Genesis 16

¹Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bore him no children. She had an Egyptian slave-girl whose name was Hagar, ²and Sarai said to Abram, 'You see that the Lord has prevented me from bearing children; go in to my slave-girl; it may be that I shall obtain children by her.' And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. ³So, after Abram had lived for ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her slave-girl, and gave her to her husband Abram as a wife. ⁴He went in to Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress. ⁵Then Sarai said to Abram, 'May the wrong done to me be on you! I gave my slave-girl to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the Lord judge between you and me!' ⁶But Abram said to Sarai, 'Your slave-girl is in your power; do to her as you please.' Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she ran away from her.

⁷ The angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. ⁸And he said, 'Hagar, slave-girl of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?' She said, 'I am

running away from my mistress Sarai.' ⁹The angel of the Lord said to her, 'Return to your mistress, and submit to her.' ¹⁰The angel of the Lord also said to her, 'I will so greatly multiply your offspring that they cannot be counted for multitude.' ¹¹And the angel of the Lord said to her, 'Now you have conceived and shall bear a son; you shall call him Ishmael, for the Lord has given heed to your affliction. ¹²He shall be a wild ass of a man, with his hand against everyone, and everyone's hand against him; and he shall live at odds with all his kin.' ¹³So she named the Lord who spoke to her, 'You are El-roi'; for she said, 'Have I really seen God and remained alive after seeing him?' ¹⁴Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; it lies between Kadesh and Bered.

¹⁵ Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. ¹⁶Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael. [NRSV]

Genesis 21:8-21

⁸ The child grew, and was weaned; and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. ⁹But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, playing with her son Isaac. ¹⁰So she said to Abraham, ‘Cast out this slave woman with her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit along with my son Isaac.’ ¹¹The matter was very distressing to Abraham on account of his son. ¹²But God said to Abraham, ‘Do not be distressed because of the boy and because of your slave woman; whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be named after you. ¹³As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a nation of him also, because he is your offspring.’ ¹⁴So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.

¹⁵ When the water in the skin was gone, she cast the child under one of the bushes. ¹⁶Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot; for she said, ‘Do not let me look on the death of the child.’ And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept. ¹⁷And God heard the voice of the boy; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, ‘What troubles you, Hagar? Do not be afraid; for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. ¹⁸Come, lift up the boy and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make a great nation of him.’ ¹⁹Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. She went, and filled the skin with water, and gave the boy a drink.

²⁰ God was with the boy, and he grew up; he lived in the wilderness, and became an expert with the bow. ²¹He lived in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt. [NRSV]

Romans 6: 1-11

Dying and Rising with Christ

¹What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? ²By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? ³Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a

resurrection like his. ⁶We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷For whoever has died is freed from sin. ⁸But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. ¹¹So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

[NRSV]

Psalm 86

A Prayer of David.

¹Incline your ear, O Lord, and answer me,
for I am poor and needy.
²Preserve my life, for I am devoted to you;

save your servant who trusts in you.
You are my God; ³be gracious to me, O Lord,
for to you do I cry all day long.
⁴Gladden the soul of your servant,

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for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.
⁵For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving,
 abounding in steadfast love to all who call on you.
⁶Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer;
 listen to my cry of supplication.
⁷In the day of my trouble I call on you,
 for you will answer me.

⁸There is none like you among the gods, O Lord,
 nor are there any works like yours.
⁹All the nations you have made shall come
 and bow down before you, O Lord,
 and shall glorify your name.
¹⁰For you are great and do wondrous things;
 you alone are God.
¹¹Teach me your way, O Lord,
 that I may walk in your truth;
 give me an undivided heart to revere your name.
¹²I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole

heart,
 and I will glorify your name for ever.
¹³For great is your steadfast love towards me;
 you have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.

¹⁴O God, the insolent rise up against me;
 a band of ruffians seeks my life,
 and they do not set you before them.
¹⁵But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious,
 slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and
 faithfulness.
¹⁶Turn to me and be gracious to me;
 give your strength to your servant;
 save the child of your serving-maid.
¹⁷Show me a sign of your favour,
 so that those who hate me may see it and be put to
 shame,
 because you, Lord, have helped me and comforted
 me. [NRSV]

Matthew 10: 24 - 39

²⁴ ‘A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave
 above the master; ²⁵it is enough for the disciple to be
 like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they
 have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how
 much more will they malign those of his household!
 Whom to Fear

²⁶ ‘So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up
 that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that
 will not become known. ²⁷What I say to you in the
 dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered,
 proclaim from the housetops. ²⁸Do not fear those who
 kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him
 who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹Are not
 two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them
 will fall to the ground unperceived by your Father.
³⁰And even the hairs of your head are all counted. ³¹So
 do not be afraid; you are of more value than many
 sparrows.

³² ‘Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before
 others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in
 heaven; ³³but whoever denies me before others, I also
 will deny before my Father in heaven.
 Not Peace, but a Sword

³⁴ ‘Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the
 earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.
³⁵For I have come to set a man against his father,
 and a daughter against her mother,
 and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;
³⁶and one’s foes will be members of one’s own
 household.
³⁷Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not
 worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter
 more than me is not worthy of me; ³⁸and whoever
 does not take up the cross and follow me is not
 worthy of me. ³⁹Those who find their life will lose it,
 and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.
 [NRSV]