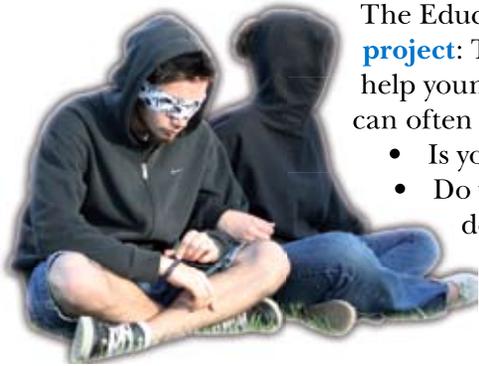


Christian Education Update

August 2007



A Project of *Focus and Hope*



The Education Committee is exploring a major **project**: To help youth *focus* and *hope*. How do we help young people sort through life in a world that can often be disturbing?

- Is your church a community of hope?
- Do you throw up your hands in despair and await the Lord's Return? How does that help a young person starting so many stages in life? How do you teach the Lord's Second Coming so that young people see it adds to their future?
- Is your presentation of the gospel seen as Good News by young people?
- Does your perspective about God's involvement in history (governments and structures, including church structures) speak to a cynicism that says "nothing will ever change"?

Discussing Anabaptist theology

The Evangelical Anabaptist Committee continues its work. The committee **serves** by authority of the BCM and the Board of Leadership and Outreach. Pastor Kenton Penner (Treesbank) is the committee's chairperson (204-824-2268).

Follow Me still available

The thirteen-lesson discussion guide was produced by our Education Committee, supported by the Board of Leadership and Outreach's Social Concerns Committee. The guide is topical but focuses on biblical social justice. The booklet can be used by cell groups, senior youth groups, older teen/adult Sunday school classes, as a pastoral preaching aid, and in other ways. Discussion questions are scattered within the lessons and there is a list of resources in the back. EM churches have used the booklet and found it **challenging**. The booklet costs \$2.50 (shipping is extra). BCM encourages **all EM churches** to use this resource. A second printing of the guide is possible. There is some preliminary discussion about developing another guide, possibly for 2008-2009.

Worship Theology Committee

The BCM is contacting people to help form a committee to look at the Worship Theology within our churches and conference. If you are aware of people who might be **helpful** on such a committee, please contact me. It would look at music-worship trends and their underlying theologies within our conference churches and respond with thoughtful guidance in this area. The constitution allows the BCM to "provide resources and services to help congregations with Christian education" and "music ministries" (p. 37).

Theodidaktos: Journal for EMC Theology and Education

The second **edition** of the journal, edited by Darryl Klassen, senior pastor at Kleefeld EMC, is available. Five copies are sent to each church, with more available. *Theodidaktos* means *learning from God*. To submit a paper for the third edition, contact editor Klassen at 204-377-4773.

Pulpit Supply/Discussion Opportunities

I am available for pulpit supply and Sunday School discussions. I have responsibilities in areas of Christian education. If you have **suggestions** about Christian Education, let me know.

Social Concerns Committee

The EMC Social Concerns Committee is willing to make Sunday School **presentations** on various topics (social justice, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, and more). Contact chair Wally Doerksen (Good News Community Church, Steinbach) at 204-326-9444.

Sunday School Curricula

The Education Committee of the BCM **encourages** using Anabaptist materials or, at least, the supplementing of interdenominational materials. Anabaptist materials are available through Mennonite Publishing Network, Kindred Press (check the *Word Wise* and *Luminaire Studies* produced by the Mennonite Brethren), and Steinbach Bible College (six sets of study and leader's guides are available from the college). SBC's titles are *Radical Discipleship*, *Come Let Us Worship*, *The Last Trumpet*, *Minor Prophets*, *Hebrews*, *Living Truth*, and *The Church that Christ Builds*. *Gather 'Round* is a curriculum for children, youth and adults, put out by Mennonite Church Canada, Mennonite Church USA, and Church of the Brethren (www.gatherround.org).

Defending Major Christian Beliefs

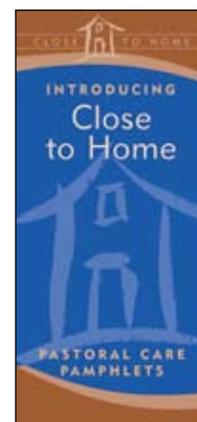
How equipped is your congregation to defend the Christian Faith? Ever hear of *The Da Vinci Code*, *The Lost Bones of Jesus*, *The Judas Papers*, *The Jesus Papers*, *The Pagan Christ* or *The Jesus Seminar*? There are effective materials responding to these areas. Within the past year or two which has your church library purchased more of, novels about the second coming or titles on apologetics? We can't simply assume that our adult members, and youth, believe major doctrines. There needs to be an on-going **conscious effort** to defend major Christian truths. "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (1 Peter 3:15). "I believe with all my soul... in the necessity of Christian apologetics, the necessity of a reasoned defence of the Christian faith" (J. Gresham Machen).

Faith Without Doctrine?

"We don't emphasize teaching doctrines so much as teaching faith," a pastor once told Lutheran minister Allen Maleske. He pondered this and wrote, "True saving faith **cannot** exist without doctrines. As a pastor, even at the deathbed, I had taught doctrines. I taught the reality and damnableness of sin. I taught the sacrifice of God's Son for our forgiveness. I taught eternal life through faith in Jesus. And those teachings evoked a response in faith. Although faith and faith alone saves, we cannot separate faith from doctrine... You don't need to know all the teachings of the Bible to be saved, but all of the teachings have worked together for your salvation" (*The Canadian Lutheran*, March 2007).

Close to Home Series

Faith & Life Resources has embarked on a three-year publication project dealing with topics affecting our **family life**. Samples of the first three were purchased for you: *Dealing with spouse abuse*, *Dealing with eating disorders*, and *Dealing with pornography*. Information is available at www.mph.org/closetohome. Congregations are encouraged to benefit from the series.



Blessings on the teaching ministries within your churches!

Terry M. Smith (Rev.)
Executive Secretary