

Words from Wilmot

Music with a Smile

When Wilmot organist Eric Tennant sits down at the



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Eric Tennant was born in Fredericton and spent his early childhood here before moving to Nova Scotia with his family. He took his undergraduate degree at Acadia University; a Master's degree in sacred music was earned at Union Theological Seminary in New York City.

Yet he chose to make his living in a different profession altogether. "I started out as a musician and then became a lawyer. I didn't like the income you make as a musician, to be honest," he chuckles.

And if you think the law and church music are an odd pairing, Eric begs to

Eric worked full time as a legal officer in the Ontario ministry of transportation, but he always had a church at the same time. Upon retirement he moved to London, Ontario and then to Fredericton where he and his wife Anna plan to remain.

In the first few years after he retired Eric says the phone calls never stopped. So many churches are in need of an organist that there is great demand for those willing to fill in (which is how he came to Wilmot).

"For five years after I retired until I came here I heard from six United churches, six Anglican churches—this is for supply work—two Baptists, two Roman Catholic, a Presbyterian and a Lutheran... There's a shortage everywhere."

Music for a Sunday service doesn't just happen. Everything must be chosen carefully and co-

ordinated with the minister(s) and the choir director (in our case the talented Steven Peacock). The music shouldn't fight the service; "it should complement it".

(Please see "Music" page 8)

"Music for a Sunday service doesn't just happen. Everything must be chosen carefully and coordinated with the minister(s) and the choir director . . ."

keyboards, his mastery of the pedals and pipes produces music of breathtaking beauty.

"You can do things with a pipe organ you can't do with any other instrument. This is the thing that's appealing about it, partly. It's a very powerful instrument. You can do quiet things, you can do powerful things, you can make sounds and all sorts of things like that. It has been described as the king of instruments and it really is."

differ. "One of the best string quartets in Toronto



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when I was there was composed of the four senior partners in a law firm," he laughs.

On April 28, 2006, we will welcome Stephen Lewis at Wilmot United Church. He will be speaking on *The Politics of Compassion*.

Look for more information in Wilmot's weekly bulletins and on bulletin boards throughout the church.

Check out our Web Site at www.wilmotuc.nb

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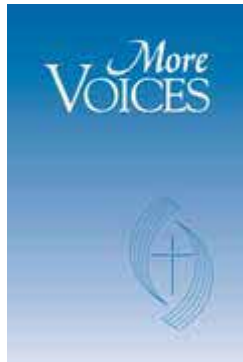
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congregation.

You Are Invited. . .



Join us at Hillcrest United Church in Stanley, NB on Wednesday, February 15 at 7:00 pm for an Evening of Singing with Bruce and Cheryl Harding.

Bruce and Cheryl are recording artists and worship and workshop leaders from New Westminster, BC. They have shared their musical gifts and love of God with congregations and gatherings across Canada.

Bruce has a PhD in sacred music and is editor of the "More

Voices" project, creating a supplement to our Voices United hymn book.

Expect a worshipful evening in which we will gather not only to listen but also to participate in singing a wide variety of songs of the Spirit.

A donation of \$10.00 at the door is suggested. Refreshments will be served after the concert.

■ Murray McFarlane

Wilmot's Growing Relationship with CUBA



Translating Conversations

We are honoured to have a growing relationship with people and communities in Cuba. So far close to a dozen members of Wilmot Church have traveled there to meet with church leaders, seminary students and government officials.

This picture features the one known as "the Father" of Cuban Theology ...a Theology in Revolution. His name is Sergio Arce, his wife Nacyra Gomez is beside him.

Chris is translating his conversation with group members—a conversation which explored everything from Cuban politics to a re-reading of the Exodus story.

Gardens at the Seminary

The seminary has a resident community of students, their spouses and children. There are over 150 mouths to feed on any given day and these gardens do the job. The produce supplies the seminary kitchen. It is given to two local schools and sold at better than market rates to poor people near by.

Food is the biggest challenge for the seminary. Staff costs are not nearly as difficult as food.

Wilmot church raised enough money to send with Chris to help them with this difficult task of feeding themselves.



Chapel

We heard about the seminary in Matanzas when Reinario Arce and Patricia Ares spoke with our church last November. It sits on a hill overlooking the city of Matanzas and this is the chapel.

The seminary was founded in 1949 and serves three denominations: Methodist, Presbyterian and Anglican. Services are held here every morning at 10 a.m.



Wilmot's Growing Relationship with CUBA (continued)



Repairs Provided by Wilmot

This is the greenhouse that supplies food to a special school in Habana for children with mental and emotional challenges and needs. The school is called the Hogar (Home) Castellana. It is a place of miracles where all children find a place of warmth and understanding. Through the generosity of the Wilmot congregation they will be able to install the plastic for these greenhouses so they can function year round and supply food for the 300 students and 280 staff.

Special School in Habana
 When we visited this school we were greeted by so much warmth and good will. Young people are so eager to share their achievements. Most visits end with a performance of their dance and a lunch provided by the staff. They said over and over how thankful they are to the people of Wilmot Church for the help we offered to them.



A congregational mailing commemorating the 20th anniversary of the 1986 Apology to First Nations is coming in early March.

Included in this package will be an invitation from the Moderator, Peter Short, and a wide assortment of education and worship resources to help us live in just and right relationships with Aboriginal peoples.

Included is information about the Healing Fund, the May 26 Day of Healing and Reconciliation, and the June 21 Aboriginal Day of Prayer.

Coming Soon to a Church Near You:

MORE VOICES (see also "You Are Invited" page 2)

What congregations will get when the 225-song collection *MORE VOICES* is published early next year is a mix that will likely challenge their sense of rhythm, push the edges of their theology and get them moving. The music will let them play a variety of instruments and sing in new languages.

While the official launch will take place at the General Council in August, 2006 a sampler will be used at Annual Meetings of Conferences this spring; many congregations will also receive the sampler.

The pew edition of the supplement is priced at \$15 a copy, but pre-publication pricing of \$13.50 is available any time up to November 15 with full payment for books ordered.

From The United Church Observer



Rod Sykes (former minister at Wilmot) and friends try out some of the songs from *MORE VOICES*

Bible Quest Contest

These three books are the prizes in our contest: two adult books and one children's book.

See contest details on page 7.

Prize winners will be chosen on Sunday, March 5 during worship.



ATTENTION SUMMER CAMPERS

The summer schedule for Camp Woolastook including full Brochure and Job Descriptions and Job Applications is now available online at www.marconf.ca/woolcamp.htm

Can You Help?

The Hospitality Committee for the Stephen Lewis Event is looking for promotional products such as note pads, pens, pins, etc., to include in approximately 200 delegates' packs.

If your company or business can offer such advertising tokens, please call Lois MacDougall 455-2157 dhugael@rogers.com or Lucille Caseley 457-2642 lucille@caseley.net

THANKS!

World Council of Churches 9th Assembly meets this month

One of the most significant developments in the 20th century in the experience of Christian churches has been the rise of



an ecumenical movement, in which churches seek reconciliation, reunion and restoration of oneness; the hope is to reverse centuries of history

Since its beginning 58 years ago, the World Council of Churches has met in full assembly only eight times. The first assembly was held in the city of Amsterdam. Subsequent assemblies have been hosted in Evanston, Illinois (1954); New Delhi, India (1961); Uppsala, Sweden (1968); Nairobi, Kenya



Porto Alegre, Brazil: This old stone bridge was built by Portuguese Colonizers

“... representing The United Church of Canada when the 9th Assembly meets this month in Porto Alegre, Brazil, will be Peter and Sue Short ...”

marked by separation and withdrawal of churches from one another, a sad history of confronting, competing, and criticizing each other in a bitter rivalry that descended to name-calling, insult and even to internecine warfare.”



Those are the opening words of a short history of the Canadian Council of Churches, of which The United Church of Canada was a founding member when it was formed in 1944.

The World Council of Churches, on the other hand, was not established until 1948 - having waited until



the end of World War II to launch itself with the goal of being “the broadest and most inclusive among the many organized expressions of the modern ecumenical movement, a movement whose goal is Christian unity.”

(1975); Vancouver, British Columbia (1983); Canberra, Australia ((1991); and Harare, Zimbabwe (1998).

The 9th Assembly will be one of the most widely representative Christian gatherings ever held, with representatives of ecumenical organizations and groups, delegates from member churches, observers and visitors attending from all around the world.

Among those persons representing The United Church of Canada when the 9th Assembly meets this month in Porto Alegre, Brazil, will be Peter and Sue Short: Sue will be attending as a visitor; Peter will be an “accredited observer”. As well, some 10 to 12 additional representatives of The United Church of Canada will be attending.

The 9th Assembly begins on February 14 and continues for ten days. It

will be a time of encounter, prayer, celebration and deliberation. While there are only about 700 official delegates, the expectation is that there will be some 3,000 Christian men and women attending, representing each of the 348 member churches (denominations) from more than 120 countries around the world. They will “reflect, speak, act, worship and work together, challenge and support each other, share and debate with each other.”

The theme of this first assembly of the World Council of Churches in the 21st century is “God, in your grace, transform the world” - symbolized in the 9th Assembly logo by

(Please see “Council” on page 8)



From the Editor...

One of the “buzzwords” heard frequently in the United Church in the last couple of years is the word “transformation”.

In Maritime Conference for example, a huge transformation is taking shape in terms of the Presbyteries within the Conference, of which our Woolastook Presbytery is one: if the current proposal continues to develop it will mean that the Maritime Conference will have only eight Presbyteries instead of the current 14.

Likewise in the Woolastook Presbytery, constant transformation occurs, with both lay

delegates and ministers moving in and out of Presbytery, and with some congregations and pastoral charges either closing entirely or being realigned with others.

Last fall for example, the Valley Mission (in Kingsclear) was officially closed by the Presbytery. St. Paul’s United Church in Edmundston, on the other hand, has formed a working relationship with the Anglican congregation there. That’s transformation.

So it should not be surprising to hear that as the World Council of Churches meets in Porto Alegre this month, the

theme has been developed around “transformation”.

Transformation is not necessarily a negative process. When we think of the season of Easter, with Ash Wednesday only a couple of weeks away (on March 1) we realize that the whole basis of the Christian faith is transformation: the possibility that we can be changed—transformed—into something or someone better than we are.

May the season of Lent this year bring to everyone in our congregation and community the hope for and the assurance of that kind of transformation.

■ Garth Caseley

Revolutionary Readers at Wilmot

On the first Wednesday evening of February a group of avid readers met in the cozy livingroom at the home of Diana Hall and her dog, Honey, to discuss John Shelby Spong’s latest book *The Sins of Scripture*.

This group of adult learners formed about two years ago when our minister, Chris Levan and Diana Hall, representing the adult division of the Christian Development Committee, discussed how they could best meet the needs of those in our congregation who wanted to delve into the insights of modern Biblical scholars within the context of contemporary spiritual issues today.

The group, which has varied in size from five to fifteen, has to date tackled five miniseries sessions based on the following books:

The Heart of Christianity, by Marcus Borg (a well-published Jesus scholar and professor at Oregon State University);

Born of a Woman, by John Shelby Spong (a well-known lecturer and author, and retired Episcopal Bishop);

Jesus: a Revolutionary Biography, by John Dominic Crossan (pre-eminent expert on the historical Jesus and biblical studies professor at DePaul University, Chicago);

Return of the Prodigal by Henry Nouwen (deceased Catholic priest, author of many books on the spiritual life and member of the L’A r c h e - Daybreak Community in Toronto);

and Spong’s latest title: *The Sins of Scripture*.

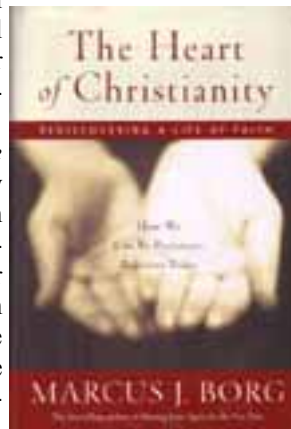
One of our group’s members recommended (and it was echoed by the rest of the group) that *The Heart of Christianity* is perhaps the best volume for launching a

personal spiritual journey into contemporary understanding of Scripture.

With Chris Levan, a superb lecturer and author in his own right, as our guide and scholarly resource person, the discussions are casually guided, and each individual’s faith journey is empathetically affirmed.

Diana Hall spoke for many of us when she said, “I will never be able to release the things that I learned as a child.”

What adult does not remember from Sunday School days an artist’s rendering of Jesus surrounded by children, under a tree and amidst flora that are not indigenous to the Middle East, yet still feel the transcendent message that chil-



(Please see “Readers” on page 6)



Mary Pratt, renowned artist and special friend of Wilmot United Church, shares her personal experiences of “seeing with the heart” at the Wilmot Winter Retreat at Beulah Camp, Brown’s Flat, NB, February 17 to 19.

Those who attend will explore their own creative responses to life with opportunities to experience music, creative writing, sign language, meditative painting, mandalas and prayer beads.

Good food, great company, and a chance to see the world in new and interesting ways!



Where (in the world) is Peter?

One of the responsibilities Peter has as United Church Moderator is to attend major world events as they occur during his term. One of these is the 9th Assembly of the World Council of Churches, meeting this month in Porto Alegre, Brazil (see story and pictures on page 4) which he will be attending with Sue.

After his return to Canada at the end of February, one of

Peter's commitments is to preach at the Anniversary Sunday at Deer Park United Church in Toronto. Later in the season he will also be spending some time in Saskatchewan with Premier Lorne Calvert who is a United Church minister.

In addition, look for more articles in The United Church Observer, as Peter hopes to continue writing.

■ Garth Caseley



When he is home Peter works from his "Spartan" office in downtown Fredericton

Are you interested in serving on a General Council Committee or Task Group?

There are dozens of opportunities, in a great variety of expertise (from architecture to faith formation) listed on the Maritime Conference Web Site at

www.marconf.ca/gc-opportunities.htm

If you are interested in exploring whether God is calling you to serve the United Church in this way, please express your interest by March 31.

Postal addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses are listed on the Web Site.

(Readers Cont'd from page 5)
dren are to be respected as equals in the sight of God?

The name "Revolutionary Readers" happened by default after hearing Spong's story about members of a study group in Louisville, Kentucky who were forced to leave their congregation because they were reading contemporary religious authors who questioned the accepted creeds "that had been once and for all delivered to the saints".

Revolutionary Readers was the name which stuck to this recalcitrant progressive group when they were welcomed into a sister congregation.

Since "revolutionary" has an inherent tone implying great and (usually) violent change, the Wilmot group hastens to assure those who ask that they are more like "plumbers" than "revolutionaries", trying to plumb the depths of their faith and bring meaning to their life experiences.

As Spong writes in his latest book, *"We Christians must journey...to the core of our faith and there allow ourselves to discover its essence, to enter its meaning and finally to transcend its limits."*

Our group will spend one more session on Spong's book, and then turn to an-

other contemporary author.

In the meantime you are invited to pick up any of the books that the Revolutionary Readers have enjoyed from the Wilmot Library during Coffee and Conversation the last Sunday of each month and begin to push the horizons of your own faith journey.

Chris has written, *"No matter our skill, we all have inklings of spiritual insight. There is no special knowledge necessary to think our way into God's presence. A willing heart and open mind will do just fine."*

■ Lucille Caseley

The Saturday Drop In Centre has received a generous donation of a pair of shiny new White Sewing Machines, needles, many spools of thread and accompanying supplies.

Shortly before Christmas, Sandi Coutts-Sutherland thought that sewing might be a well-received option for the visitors to our Saturday night group.

Lynn and Don Mersereau, owners of Sewing World on Prospect

Street ("just a few stitches east of the Hanwell Road") kindly donated the machines et al to the church—along with the assurance that the equipment would be serviced as required, free of charge.



When Sandi arrived with the machines, one young man quickly asked her to mend his jacket... which she did!

A big "thank you" to Sewing World for their generosity!

■ Barb Cross

Bible Quest for CHILDREN

1. The bible contains four gospels called _____, _____, _____ and _____.
2. There are _____ letters to the church in Corinth found in the New Testament.
3. When Jesus was a teenager he got left behind in _____ because he was talking with religious leaders.
4. The bible begins with the story of how God created the world in _____ days.
5. When the fishermen in John’s gospel came in from their night’s fishing and saw the resurrected Jesus on the shore they had _____ fish in the boat at the time.
6. Matthew was a _____ before he became a disciple of Jesus.
7. In the parable of the lost sheep, the shepherd lost _____ sheep.
8. Paul says the chief commandment is:

_____!
9. According to the gospels it is harder for a _____ to get into the kingdom of heaven than it is for a _____ to go through _____.

My name is:

Bible Quest for ADULTS

1. The Bible says, “Pound your plows into swords and your pruning hooks into spears.”
True False
2. When God created the earth God said it was “delicious”.
True False
3. The Bible proposes monogamy as the best and only form for human marriage.
True False
4. Paul thinks it is right for women to wear a head covering in church and defer to their husbands in matters of religion.
True False
5. The gospels tell us that Jesus had brothers and sisters.
True False
6. The book of Leviticus says that loans must be cancelled out every 7 years.
True False
7. Matthew’s gospel says that Joseph and Mary were residents of Bethlehem.
True False
8. There are two explanations given for the commandment to keep the Sabbath day holy.
True False
9. The bible condemns slavery.
True False
10. John’s gospel has the most elaborate explanation of the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.
True False
11. The prophet Elisha commanded creation to kill the brats who insulted him on the road. They called him “baldy”. So two she-bears came out of the woods and mauled them to death.
True False

My name is:

INSTRUCTIONS FOR BIBLE QUEST CONTEST

ADULTS: Answer the True / False questions and send your answers to garth@caseley.net or give them to Garth Caseley in church.

Entries with the correct answers will be put in a hat for a draw for **two prizes:** Stephen Lewis’ book, *Race Against Time* and Chris Levan’s work, *Sin Boldly*.

CHILDREN: Fill in the blanks and send your answers to garth@caseley.net or give them to Garth Caseley in church.

Entries with the correct answers will be put in a hat for a draw for **a prize:** Ralph Milton’s *Family Story Bible*.

■ Chris Levan

All prize winners will be chosen on Sunday, March 5, during worship.

(Editor’s note: Don’t forget to ask Chris about the biblical practise of “drawing lots”: Urim and Thummim.)



Words from Wilmot

is available in

LARGE PRINT

for those with impaired vision.

These will be available on a limited basis for each issue.

If you would like to receive the LARGE PRINT edition, please ask your Elder. . .

AND ONLINE

(in colour)

at our Wilmot United Church web site

www.wilmotuc.nb.ca

(Council Cont'd from page 4)

the hand of God and a praying hand; creation and the cross; the spirit of peace in the form of a dove; and the covenant rainbow in the background.

The location: Porto Alegre is the largest city in southern Brazil, with about 1.5 million residents. It is an ancient city by our standards, dating back to 1742, and has an interesting mix of the very old and the very new. Its importance centres around industry, culture and regional trade. It is accustomed to welcoming visitors from many cultures.



God, in your grasp, transform the world

The theme: The 9th Assembly theme of transformation calls for



- 1) transformation of the human heart, exemplified by the

Greek word metanoia: a change in attitudes and assumptions;

- 2) transformation of community as an awakening from indifference and extending compassion to victims of poverty and all forms of injustice; and
- 3) transformation as healing of the earth, "to live with respect in creation" as the United Church creed says it so poetically.

We wish Peter and Sue well as they attend this major world event in the life of the ecumenical church on our behalf, and we look forward to hearing about their experiences after they return home. Much more information about the World Council of Churches and the 9th Assembly can be found at the Web Site: http://www.wcc_coe.org

■ Garth Caseley

(Music Cont'd from page 1)

Eric likes to practice at least ten hours a week. This is necessary to tackle difficult pieces, such as Chorale No. 3 in A Minor by Franck, a Prelude chosen for a recent Sunday service.

And he's already at work on another demanding piece, this one for Palm Sunday.

Our congregation is blessed with the wealth of his talent and dedication.

■ Colleen Kitts



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EXPLORE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP: GOD HATES RELIGION

- three evenings to examine the foundations of the Christian faith
- everyone is welcome, especially those looking to make a commitment to Wilmot United Church membership
- beginning at 7:30 p.m. with a presentation and ending with round table discussions

Wednesday March 8th: GOD HATES RELIGION The Graceful Equation

Wednesday March 15th: GOD HATES RELIGION The Real Thing

Thursday March 23: GOD HATES RELIGION Hope Beyond Wishful Thinking

WE'RE ON THE WEB AT WWW.WILMOTUC.NB.CA

HAVE YOU CHECKED LATELY?

