



First Contact

Abel Discovers Community

Hartwick Wiehler

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Dear Momma:

Thanks for the last package that you sent me. The cookies tasted great.

How are you and Dad doing? I have been busy lately doing some different things. The winters here are mixed with spring. I prefer our winters up north where it stays cold until spring breakup. I wanted to give you an update of what I have been doing. You may find it interesting.

Remember that church that I told you I visited once about a year ago? I had just arrived in Calgary and so I went to this church that someone had mentioned to me. Remember I told you about the guy with the hearty handshake who gave me a really warm welcome. He was the one that gave me that puzzle. Remember I told you that I finally got it put together – and I only had to cut one piece! The preacher talked about community at that service. I remember it because I ended up thinking what does he mean? I felt like asking him but I didn't. But when I left church I forgot all about my questions.

Now, a year later, I suddenly remembered them when a co-worker from work invited me over for an evening. We watched a movie about a city police officer who ends up running away to live with a bunch of old fashioned farmers. Now that seemed to be a real community! They dressed funny and they all dressed the same. They lived on farms close to each other. The farms actually looked familiar to our farm without any trucks or cars. Instead, they rode around in a horse and buggy. I liked how they built a barn. They all gathered for the day and together built it. Then they had a meal, which looked delicious. (It sure was a lot faster than all those days that we slaved away on our barn.) The movie called them "people of the book".

This same friend also talks about his online community, Facebook. He uses his computer to get in touch with all his friends. He says he has hundreds. I think that most of them he never sees except for the pictures on the computer. This community sure seems different than the one from the movie. I wonder how they get together to build a barn!

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Abel Discovers Community continued...

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All of this got me thinking about community. My friend said that the people of the book in the movie are related to Mennonite. I wonder if they are related to those Mennonites, who live south of us in Le Crete? I decided to go back to that church which happens also to be a Mennonite church.

Besides, I had another reason. I remember you talking about your cousin LuAnn, who married that van Zanten guy and now they live somewhere in Manitoba. This minister seems to know a lot about your relatives – even more than you do and I know you like to keep up to date on what is going on. He must have an inside source. It makes church even more interesting because I find out the latest on my relatives as well as getting some religion .

Anyway, I went to that church last Sunday. I found a brochure on “What makes a Mennonite”. In it I read some more about community. It seems that

Mennonites stress community. I am still not quite sure what they mean. At work they also talk of community. Is it the same? I just wonder what it really means for this church. They don't dress the same. They don't live together. They don't talk about raising barns. Mind you, they had a lunch after church so I got to eat as if I had raised a barn.

The people seem friendly enough so I think that they will answer my questions. I am going to talk to a few of them and see what they have to say about this whole thing called community. It will be interesting to find out what it really means to these people. I will keep you informed.

I hope that you and Dad are doing well. The cookies were really, really good. They are all gone now.

Love,

Your son Abel



Minute Meditation—Join Together

Marv Thiessen

Sometimes the inspiration for a devotional thought comes from a strange and unlikely source. The other morning as I drove Joel to school, the car radio was tuned to Q107 as it usually is when Joel is in the car (and not infrequently when Joel is not in the car) and a feature came on done by Canadian rock singer and guitarist, Kim Mitchell. In this feature that Q107 airs several times a day, Mitchell talks about a song that he thinks is a great song and that he wishes he would have written. Then he plays the song. On this occasion, he was talking about the great “bottom end” that begins the song and then he played the song. The song was “Join Together” by The Who and dates back to the early ‘70’s. The chorus invites people to join together with the band. And that provided some inspiration as my thoughts turned from that idea to writing a minute meditation.

The idea of joining together is always a useful idea for the Christian church. With that in mind, I looked in the Bible concordance (the one I still have is for the King James Version) for the word “together.” As expected, the word occurs many times in the Bible but I was most interested in uses in the epistles where Christians are called to join together in some way. There were still quite a few occurrences. The uses of the word often occur in contexts of a call to unity. We are all in this together and should live and work together for the same purpose. In other places, the word speaks especially to doing work together. We should do things like gathering together for worship, joining in prayer together, comforting each other together or eating the bread of communion together.

I found it interesting to compare those ideas with the ideas in The Who’s song. They sing that they don’t move in any particular direction. In fact, they sing that they don’t know where they are going. Somehow, they are just on the move and everybody should join in together with them. As we think of the faith community coming together we expect more unity in purpose. We do know where we’re going. The will of God for the com-

munity of faith as revealed in the Bible is our common goal and desire. We agree on this together and commit ourselves together to do this. At our annual meeting, we had a discussion about the merits of putting a church covenant in writing as a reminder to ourselves of what we have committed to be and do together. We said that it is beneficial to have a reminder of what we have committed to together. As a church, we’re going to move forward with this idea and it will reinforce our commitment to join together.

On the other hand, I liked the way another idea in The Who’s song corresponds to Christian community life. They sing about people not needing to play in the band or lead the way. They are just invited to get



on board joyfully and join the band. When we think of the times ahead for our church, that’s an apt reminder for what we’ll need to do. By all appearances, we’re moving toward some significant leadership change in the pastoral role in our church. How will we respond? We could respond with anxiety about what will become of our church and who will do the work. Or we could respond with a sense of joyful optimism and possibility as we all agree that we’ll join together with no regard for age, gender or ethnicity in taking responsibility for the things that we hold dear and important in our church. Using the various gifts and the leadership tendencies we have, we’ll get done what we consider most important in the life of the church. Let’s allow that sense of “joining together” to galvanize us as we approach the future together.



Sharing Our Stories

Hartwick Wiehler

Manfred Claassen— On a Journey Home

When looking back at a person's life, the different paths of the journey that they experience can be seen. Manfred's journey began on Feb 26, 1926 in Ladekopp, West Prussia, Germany. He was born into a Mennonite family and had 1 brother and 3 sisters. His family lived on a medium sized farm of about 60 hectares. Manfred's first path was within a loving home on his family farm in Germany. He went to school for 4 years in Ladekopp and then went to school in Tiegenhof. World War II started when Manfred was 13 years old.

His second path started when he got drafted in 1943, 4 years after the war started. After 3 months at a boot camp, he automatically went into the army where he became a tank driver in the Panzer Abwehr Division. He received further training in Poland and more near Prague, Czechoslovakia. In 1944, Manfred was part of the group that was told to pick up their tanks. They had to wait until their tanks were before they followed their orders to proceed to the front in Austria. On their trip south, they found that soldiers were retreating from the advancing Russians, so Manfred's group also turned around and headed north back to Germany.

His path as a prisoner of war started on May 9, 1945, in Munich, when the Americans took him prisoner. Manfred was 19 years old. This period was not an easy time in his life. Immediately after being captured, he was not fed anything for the next three days. He was classified as a Displaced Enemy Person instead of a Prisoner of War so the Americans did not follow the Geneva Convention. Manfred and the other prisoners were kept in a field with no tents or blankets. The food was inadequate. One day's ration was a can of weak soup and a portion of a loaf of bread that was meant for 30 men. They had no coats and had to dig holes into the ground in order to have some shelter. In early July, the Swedish Red Cross came and visited their camp and the next day things got better. They received tents and the food improved

in quality and quantity. In fact, the prisoners enjoyed the experience of better food so much that they got diarrhea.

Manfred's path as a prisoner of war ended when he was released on Jan 26, 1946. His mother had written him letters during the war and indicated where they stayed overnight after they had fled West Prussia. He went to the town that his mother had last communicated to him, asked around, and after a few tries found where his parents had stayed. The family gave him food and shelter before his parents came and picked him up.

Manfred then started a period of time where he lived and worked in Western Germany. His parents, brother and sister lived in one room on a farm. Manfred worked on the farm for a couple of years before he found work picking apples and later in an iron factory. Manfred's father started talking about immigrating to Canada in 1950 but Manfred did not want to go. In 1951, his family left Germany and immigrated to Canada. They ended up in Diamond City, close to Coaldale, Alberta and for two years, Manfred worked in the beet fields.

Manfred's path in Calgary started in 1953, when he got a job with Art Sullivan. Manfred hardly knew how to swing a hammer but he eventually learned carpentry skills.

In 1953, he met Irmgard at the Scarborough Mennonite Church where she was staying at the "Mädchenheim". They married on February 7, 1954. Manfred had already started working on building his own house in Altadore and in October 1954, the house was finished enough so that they could move in. It took two more years before it was completed. In 1959 Manfred built a house in Glamorgan. In 1978, Manfred finished their house in Oakridge where they live to this day.

Manfred worked for his brother Helmut until

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Sharing Our Stories continued

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Helmut retired in 1968. Manfred then took over the company. He cribbed basements and also framed houses. Manfred continued this work until 1980 when he was forced to cut back due to arthritis in his hand, however he continued to work part time for a few more years.

Manfred and Irmgard's first son Eckhard was born in November, 1954. Their other children were born over the next few years, Ed in 1957, Marion in 1959 and Ron in 1962.

Manfred really enjoyed camping. They camped often as a family, at first in a tent, next in a tent trailer and finally in a trailer. They continued to camp as long as they were able to. He also enjoys reading and reads a lot, his favourite subject being about the west. In 1987 he purchased his first computer so that he could record his life story. He still uses a computer today for e-mail and for Internet access.

Manfred grew up in a Mennonite home and was baptized in 1941 by Johannes Penner. At that time baptism was more demanding than today, as a person had to memorize the catechism and recite it in front of the church. Manfred is thankful for the many blessings that he sees in many paths his life has

taken. His childhood was spent in a peaceful land. He had loving parents. Manfred and Irmgard have been married for 56 years and have 4 children, 6 grandchildren, two of whom are already married, and 1 great grandchild. They have a close-knit, loving family even though they are spread apart geographically. They talk on the phone often. They have often gone camping with their children.

Manfred sees the ways that God has worked in his life. He was raised in a Christian family. There were times when he fell away, such as during his time in the army but God nudged him back, such as when during the time he was a prisoner of war, and was given a Bible from a Lutheran church and during the Janz Brothers Revival Meetings. His faith became more important to him and in 1953 he joined the Scarborough Mennonite Church.

Manfred is on the final path of his journey. He testifies easily to the fact that Christ is his personal saviour. He is at peace with God and he looks at the future with confidence as he knows where he is going. He is not afraid of the future and freely talks about the Lord calling him home. We pray that he will continue to feel God's presence in his life as he continues on his journey. ■

The Lighter Side

An elderly woman had just returned to her home from an evening of religious service when she was startled by an intruder. As she caught the man in the act of robbing her home of its valuables, she yelled, "Stop - Acts 2:38!"(..turn from your sin...) The burglar stopped dead in his tracks. The woman calmly called the police and explained what she had done.

As the officer cuffed the man to take him in, he asked the burglar, "Why did you just stand there? All the old lady did was yell a scripture to you."

"Scripture?"replied the burglar, "She said she had an AXE and two 38's!"

A Special Hymn

A preacher was completing a temperance sermon; with great expression he said, "If I had all the beer in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river."

With even greater emphasis he said, "And if I had all the wine in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river."

And then finally, he said, "And if I had all the whiskey in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river."

He sat down.

The song leader then stood very cautiously and announced with a smile, "For our closing song, let us sing Hymn # 365: "Shall We Gather at the River."

The Lighter Side continued.....



One thing the search committee doesn't want to hear.



"Would you really visit me as often if the hospital didn't have ESPN?"

Family Fuel

Alissa Bender

Easter Story Cookies

Here's a recipe to make with your children the night before Easter, to talk about the Easter story!

Ingredients:

- 1 cup whole pecans
 - 1 tsp vinegar
 - 3 egg whites
 - pinch of salt
 - 1 cup sugar
 - tape
 - wooden spoon
 - baggie
 - Bible
-
- Preheat oven to 300° (Do not wait until after the cookies are started). Place pecans in baggie and let children beat them with the wooden spoon to break into small pieces. Explain that after Jesus was arrested, he was beaten by the Roman soldiers. Read John 19:1-3.
 - Let each child smell the vinegar. Put 1 tsp vinegar into mixing bowl. Read John 19:28-30 which tells that when Jesus was thirsty on the cross, he was given vinegar to drink.
 - Add egg whites to vinegar. Eggs represent life. Explain that Jesus gave His life to give us life. Read John 10:10-11.
 - Sprinkle a little salt into each child's hand. Let them taste it and brush the rest into the bowl. Explain that this represents the salty tears shed by Jesus' followers. Read Luke 23:27.
 - So far, the ingredients are not very appetizing. Add 1 cup sugar. Explain that the sweetest part of the story is that Jesus died because He loves us. He wants us to know him and belong to him. Read Psalm 34:8 and John 3:16.
 - Beat with a mixer on high speed for 12 to 15 minutes until stiff peaks are formed. Explain that the color white represents the purity in God's eyes of those whose sins have been cleansed by Jesus. Read Isaiah 1:18 and John 3:1-3.
 - Fold in broken pecans. Drop by teaspoons onto wax paper covered cookie sheet. Explain that each mound represents the rocky tomb where Jesus' body was laid. Read Matthew 27:57-60.
 - Put the cookie sheet in the oven, close the door and turn the oven OFF. Give each child a piece of tape and seal the oven door. Read Matthew 27:65-66 to learn that Jesus' tomb was sealed.
 - **GO TO BED!** Explain that they may feel sad to leave the cookies in the oven overnight. Jesus' followers were sad when the tomb was sealed. Read John 16:20-22.
 - On Easter morning, open the oven and give everyone a cookie. Notice the cracked surface and take a bite. The cookies are hollow! On the first Easter, Jesus' followers were amazed to find the tomb open and empty. Read Matthew 28:1-9.

He is risen! He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!

Family Fuel—Discernment Part 2 **continued ...**

Looking Back

Hartwick Wiehler

Dec 6	Inter-Mennonite Advent Service at Abbeydale Christian Fellowship
Dec 12	Annual Christmas Banquet with a Silent Auction to raise funds for the youth. Over \$4,000 was raised.
Dec 24	Christmas Eve Program presented by the Sunday School. During the Advent season people stuffed Pete the Pig raising a total of \$1,101.08 for the Canadian Leprosy Mission.
Jan 12	Grant Sawatzky candidated for the position of lead minister. There was a potluck lunch after the service. Ggrant has since withdrawn his candidacy.
Feb 6	Annual General Meeting. Pastor Alissa Bender announced that she will not be seeking another term at our church. Many new persons were elected and appointed. Rob Ratzlaff took over as chair of the church. Thanks to everyone who serves.
Feb 7 - 14	Annual Prayer services. On two evenings, a supper was served before the service.

Looking Ahead

Hartwick Wiehler

Mar 19 - 20	Mennonite Church Alberta Conference
Apr 2	Good Friday service
Apr 4	Easter Sunday

Family Life

Hartwick Wiehler

Births

Dec 8	Stony Bena, proud parents are Ben and Mamissa Bena
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Deaths

Dec 31	Erhard Meier, husband of Christel Meier
Jan 23	Elisabeth, daughter of Patrick and Julie Eldridge
Feb 18	Hildegard Boldt, wife of Gerhard, mother to Rita and Robert Fiss, grandmother to Michael and Christina and Eric.

Let us remember those facing illness and physical challenges

- Hedy Bartel at home
- Henry Bergen in Bethany Care Centre
- John and Hilda Franz at home
- Rose Ferrara at home
- Anny Heidebrecht in Monterey Place
- Bill and Katie Hildebrand at home

- Helena Neufeld in Three Hills Extended Care
- Susie Penner in Spruce Lodge
- Mary Quiring in Carewest Dr. Vernon Fanning Centre
- Sonya Regehr at home
- Eldriede Wiens in Staywell Manor

Thin Places

A "Thin Place" is a place where the spiritual and the natural world intersect. It is a place where it is possible to be touched by God.

Please submit your "Thin Places" so that everyone can benefit from your story along with you.

The Sparrow at Starbucks

The song that silenced the cappuccino machine....

It was chilly in Manhattan but warm inside the Starbucks shop on 51st Street and Broadway, just a skip up from Times Square. Early November weather in New York City holds only the slightest hint of the bitter chill of late December and January, but it's enough to send the masses crowding indoors to vie for available space and warmth. For a musician, it's the most lucrative Starbucks location in the world, I'm told, and consequently, the tips can be substantial if you play your tunes right.

Apparently, we were striking all the right chords that night, because our basket was almost overflowing. It was a fun, low-pressure gig - I was playing keyboard and singing backup for my friend who also added rhythm with an arsenal of percussion instruments. We mostly did pop songs from the '40s to the '90s with a few original tunes thrown in. During our emotional rendition of the classic, "If You Don't Know Me by Now," I noticed a lady sitting in one of the lounge chairs across from me. She was swaying to the beat and singing along.

After the tune was over, she approached me. "I apologize for singing along on that song. Did it bother you?" she asked.

"No," I replied. "We love it when the audience joins in. Would you like to sing up front on the next selection?" To my delight, she accepted my invitation. "You choose," I said. "What are you in

the mood to sing?"

"Well. ... do you know any hymns?" Hymns? This woman didn't know who she was dealing with. I cut my teeth on hymns. Before I was even born, I was going to church. I gave our guest singer a knowing look. "Name one."

"Oh, I don't know. There are so many good ones. You pick one."

"Okay," I replied. "How about 'His Eye is on the Sparrow'?"

My new friend was silent, her eyes averted. Then she fixed her eyes on mine again and said, "Yeah. Let's do that one." She slowly nodded her head, put down her purse, straightened her jacket and faced the center of the shop. With my two-bar setup, she began to sing.

"Why should I be discouraged? Why should the shadows come?"

The audience of coffee drinkers was transfixed. Even the gurgling noises of the cappuccino machine ceased as the employees stopped what they were doing to listen. The song rose to its conclusion.

"I sing because I'm happy; I sing because I'm free. For His eye is on the sparrow And I know He watches me."

When the last note was sung, the applause crescendoed to a deafening roar that would have rivaled a sold-out crowd at Carnegie Hall. Embarrassed, the woman tried to shout over the din, "Oh, y'all go back to your coffee! I didn't come in here to do a concert! I just came in here to get somethin' to drink, just like you!"

But the ovation continued.. I embraced my new friend. "You, my dear, have made my whole year! That was beautiful!"

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Thin Places

"Well, it's funny that you picked that particular hymn," she said.

"Why is that?"

"Well . . ." she hesitated again, "that was my daughter's favorite song."

"Really!" I exclaimed.

"Yes," she said, and then grabbed my hands. By this time, the applause had subsided and it was business as usual. "She was 16. She died of a brain tumor last week."

I said the first thing that found its way through my stunned silence. "Are you going to be okay?"

She smiled through tear-filled eyes and squeezed my hands. "I'm gonna be okay. I've just got to keep trusting the Lord and singing his songs, and everything's gonna be just fine." She picked up her bag, gave me her card, and then she was gone.

Was it just a coincidence that we happened to be singing in that particular coffee shop on that particular November night? Coincidence that this wonderful lady just happened to walk into that particular shop? Coincidence that of all the hymns to choose from, I just happened to pick the very hymn that was the favorite of her daughter, who had died just the week before? I refuse to believe it. God has been arranging encounters in human history since the beginning of time, and it's no stretch for me to imagine that he could reach into a coffee shop in midtown Manhattan and turn an ordinary gig into a revival. It was a great reminder that if we

keep trusting him and singing his songs, everything's gonna be okay.

The next time you feel like GOD can't use YOU, just remember.

- Noah was a drunk
- Abraham was too old
- Isaac was a daydreamer
- Jacob was a liar
- Leah was ugly
- Joseph was abused
- Moses had a stuttering problem
- Gideon was afraid
- Sampson had long hair and was a womanizer
- Rahab was a prostitute
- Jeremiah and Timothy were too young
- David had an affair and was a murderer
- Elijah was suicidal
- Isaiah preached naked
- Jonah ran from God
- Naomi was a widow
- Job went bankrupt
- John the Baptist ate bugs
- Peter denied Christ
- The Disciples fell asleep while praying
- Martha worried about everything
- The Samaritan woman was divorced, more than once
- Zaccheus was too small
- Paul was too religious
- Timothy had an ulcer...
- AND Lazarus was dead!

Submitted by Erika Janz

Adoption

Rita Dahl

After being married for seven years and not having any children, we thought we should adopt. Our friends encouraged us.

Our first child, Karen, arrived in 1963. After being interviewed by the social worker several times, we

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Adoption continued

Rita Dahl

were told to wait for a call from them. The call came on August 27 and on August 28 we were at the Welfare office as directed. We were taken to a little room and told to wait. Soon a worker brought in this little bundle and put it on the examining table. Before she left we were told to have a good look at her, and if we didn't think we wanted this one, we were not obliged to accept her.

Karen had been born several weeks premature and at four weeks of age was still only five pounds. She was wrapped in a greyish blanket and wore a dingy white nightie and in this garb she seemed to have no color at all. She had big blue eyes that seemed curious and searching, and she had absolutely straight brown hair that stuck out in all directions. We had decided that morning before we left home that unless there was something very wrong, we would accept whatever the workers had chosen for us. This made decisions much easier. So we dressed her in the new clothes we had brought for her – white dress, sweater, and bonnet and booties with pink ribbons. Then we wrapped her in the soft pink blanket and she took on the color of the blanket and we thought she was beautiful.

The three of us then went home. We were now a family, and although that felt good, we were a bit apprehensive about our new responsibilities. At ten o'clock that morning Ralph went to work and because he was on call in emergency, he had to stay there all night. I was alone with Karen, and I was terrified. I had never even babysat, and now I was totally responsible for this new little life. Since she was so small she needed to be fed every three hours which meant I was awake all night trying to meet her needs.

Ralph got home the next morning, had breakfast, and went back to work. I was alone again. Paternity leaves were not in vogue in those days. Our neighbours kept dropping in and helping and giving much needed advice from their store of wisdom and experience. We quickly became enchanted with this new arrival and we loved her dearly.

In 1965 we adopted Diane, our second child. She was five months old when we got her and sleeping all night, sitting up, crawling and getting into things. She had the sweetest smile. The two girls were very

different but they soon were good playmates. It seems Karen thought she needed to be Diane's speech therapist and she would try to teach her words she heard around the house. One day we heard her trying to get Diane to say "Doctor Zhivago."

In 1967 Ken was born. We had come to believe that we would not have children of our own, so this was a surprise. He was a long skinny, wrinkled little newborn with red hair. It's amazing how good that can look when it's your own.

In 1970 we adopted Greg, because Ken needed a brother. He was three months old when he came to us and from day one he was a high energy project. We often thought that if he had come first, he would have been an only child because we wouldn't have needed any more. By then we were getting to be close to 40 and our energy levels were being tested. But he, with the others, was great fun and good to have around.

When we adopted these children we sometimes had negative feelings toward their mothers and wondered how anyone could give up these precious little ones. In the past few years we have met both the girls' mothers and they have told us of their circumstances and now we think we understand much better. They are both lovely ladies and they have their own stories to tell. We are so grateful to them and to God for allowing their children to be part of our lives.

We would adopt again if we had that part of our lives to live over again. We have certainly had our sorrows and stresses as well as joys but we have learned so much more from them than they have learned from us. They have enriched our lives and we have travelled roads we would never have taken without them. We have been to composer festivals, art contests, figure skating competitions, hockey matches and all manner of events that we would never have done on our own. And now our children try to keep us in touch with today's world when we can no longer keep up.





Editorial

Hartwick Wiehler

She spoke at our "Beyond Lumina" event. Lumina is the company I consult with. A "Beyond Lumina" is an event that is intended to get our clients together for something that has nothing to do with work. One of my partners had organized a lady by the name of Marina Nemat, to speak at his church and then he invited her to come and speak to us at a breakfast meeting. It wasn't meant to be a religious event, just an event to expand our minds with something other than computer stuff.

Marina spoke about her experience as a teenager. She grew up in Iran and lived during the time that the Shah of Iran was overthrown and Ayatollah Khomeini's Islamic regime took power. In 1982, when she was 16 years old, she was arrested and locked up in the notorious Evin prison. It was a time of beatings and torture and seeing friends executed. She was also condemned but survived because she converted to Islam and married one of the guards. After her husband was assassinated, his family helped to get her released from prison.

Marina returned to Christianity, married a man who had waited for her and a few years later immigrated to Canada. She wrote a book about her experiences called *Prisoner of Tehran*. Her story kept everyone in the audience listening intently.

One of the people in the audience asked her about her spirituality and what happened to it during her ordeal. Marina elaborated on this. Her grandmother was the one that influenced her to have a personal faith in God. She attended a Catholic church when she was young. Her experiences in the prison did not turn her

away from God, but instead, her faith helped her through the ordeal. She developed more understanding about people because of her experiences. After she had married her first husband, the prison guard, she began to understand more about him. She found out that he had been tortured in the same prison by the secret police from the Shah of Iran. He had been tortured and now he was torturing others. She ended up turning away from violence and understanding that it was not the answer. Love is an answer to evil and injustice.

I found her story amazing, especially when I consider that she was only sixteen years old when she was imprisoned. I learned several things. I found it interesting how God helps people through extremely difficult circumstances. He may not take our pain and suffering immediately away, but faith in him does help. It was interesting to see the connection of how violence to one person can lead that person to commit violence against another. I also found it interesting to see how help can come from unexpected people. I would have never expected that the parents of the prison guard that she had been forced to marry would help her to obtain a release from prison.

It turned out to be a real "Beyond Lumina" event.

