



Northwest People

by Dr. Larry Perkins

In our October 2003 issue of Northwest News we featured Hanna and Pierre Jutras. Pierre is a student with Northwest@ACTS in the Master of Theology program. Hanna graduated from ACTS in 2001 with the Master of Arts in Christian Studies.

Pierre and Hanna Jutras have been commissioned to ministry in Poland and under FEBInternational

As Pierre shared earlier, "the training one receives at Northwest @ACTS is superb and many places in the world need people with such skills and desires [i.e. building up the Kingdom and particularly missions]." They and their two children are preparing to go to Poland as missionaries with the Fellowship Baptist Churches.

When people hear about 'missions' they have many different ideas. What is at the centre of missions for you?

For us it is God's command in Scripture for his people to be a "light to the nations" (Isaiah 49:6, cf. Acts 13:47). We believe we are called to carry forward the Messiah's mission and be ourselves a light to the nations. As part of this we will seek to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. We believe it is this Gospel that brings hope to people and the opportunity to experience the forgiveness and wonderful life-change that Jesus produces. The people of Poland need to hear that message. In all of this we are humbled that God would consider us as His partners in this great cause.

So as you consider a vocation in missions, how do you see yourselves fitting into God's mission agenda?

We want to feature the Great Commandment to love God and our neighbour as our way of fulfilling the Great Commission. We want to influence people to Jesus by showing his love - through caring for the neighborhood we will live in, by bringing hope to university students, by helping the poor and orphans, and through encouraging God's people in Poland to reach out into their communities. We love what Steve Green expresses in his song called "The Mission": "To love the Lord your God is the heart behind the Mission, ... across the street or around the world, the Mission is still the same, to proclaim and live the truth in Jesus' Name."

What do you anticipate will bring you the greatest joy and fulfillment in your vocation?

People in Poland do not know the Good News of Jesus in spite of the fact that it is a "religious" country. I know by experience that Catholics have many traditions and rituals that are not the expression of the Good News of salvation by faith in Jesus alone. We want to tell them the Gospel of salvation in Jesus and expect to



Pierre, Hannah, Timothy and Rachele Jutras

see Polish people find a genuine relationship with Christ. That will bring such joy! We desire to see God working in people's hearts and lives for good. Moreover, as we respond to God's will, this brings a deep sense of

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joy and fulfillment. Our obedience to God is central to this.

What are some of your fears as you look forward?

Probably our greatest fear is the difficulty of the task. Poland has never been and is still not an easy field. We want to see people saved and transformed by the Gospel. Perhaps also there is fear of living in a different culture and country and what this will mean for our family. We want to be able to live with spiritual vigour, and this will be a challenge in a society where authorities and people in general are not always friendly towards Evangelicals. Since our children are Polish citizens and will live in a country that will become theirs, we will have to depend on the social and political condition and laws of the country. If political matters deteriorate, then how will this affect our family? These are concerns for us.

Poland has a very long religious history. The majority of people would already claim some affiliation with Christianity. In this context what will be your strategy?

I (Pierre) personally have come to faith in Jesus Christ from a Catholic background. I discovered that religion in itself does not give a person a sense of certainty about personal sin and eternity. It was the expression of the Scripture and its message of salvation centred on Jesus alone (Acts 4:12, Jn 14:6, 1 Tim 2:5) that drew me to Jesus. People of Poland need to see the love and difference Christ brings into a life. When people see our love and joy, they will inquire about its source and then we will have opportunity to share our faith.

Who will you be working with? Are there established churches with whom you will connect? Will you work in the context of a ministry team?

We are planning to connect with a local national church, starting in the city of Lublin, and eventually in the north of Warsaw also. The Conservative Baptists have church ministries in Lublin and we are planning to become part of one of these ministry teams. They have a very similar ministry philosophy to our own mission agency and desire to evangelize and plant churches through personal evangelism, prayer and Bible study groups, and ministries of compassion. Our mandate will be to work with them to reach out into the community. As we proceed we will aim at planting new churches as groups of believers emerge and leaders are prepared.



Pierre speaking in the ACTS Chapel

Poland sits on the crossroads between Eastern and Western Europe. There are strong secular and religious forces at work in Europe generally. How will this influence your missions strategy?

Poland is a spiritual country. Western social issues such as abortion and homosexuality are not as prominent in Polish culture at this point. There is a strong general moral tone in the society. But as Western influences come into the country through trade, we know that the challenges of materialism, pornography, drugs, etc. will increase. There are many other issues in Polish society that we will face as we live in the country, and we

hope to discover how those factors hinder people's response to the Gospel.

You are planning to locate in the city of Lublin. Why?

Lublin is an education center and a key city in Poland. The large number of universities attract students from all over Poland. They form a large, young population that is generally more open to the Gospel. Lublin has very few evangelical churches and thus a greater need for mission work. The Catholic University in Lublin has an excellent Polish language program and so I (Pierre) will apply to study there. There is also a large orphanage in Lublin where there is an opening for children's ministry.

As God enables, what do you hope you will have achieved in fifteen years?

Our prayer is that together God will enable and guide us to
 1) be involved in planting five new churches, 2) raise up five key national pastoral leaders, and 3) to encourage many disciples in those churches. We are praying that God will also raise up five other individuals/couples from our churches in Canada to join us in ministering in the country of Poland.

How can people pray for you as you prepare during the next few months to travel to Poland and begin your ministry there?

Please pray that God will open doors and stimulate vision among churches here in Canada for this ministry. We will need much prayer, spiritual encouragement and financial support. Please pray for Poland and for us - that God will prepare the people there to receive the Gospel and guide us in His power to be a light to that nation.



President's Page

Good Ministry Leaders – A Risky, Complex Calling

It's a dangerous calling. People get killed doing it. As this year's group of seminary graduates walk across the platform and receive their degrees, I wonder which of them literally may give their lives in God's service? Will it be the emerging Bible translator attempting to start work with a new hostile people group? Maybe it will be a new pastor trying to help resolve a domestic dispute but overwhelmed by violence. This is not idle speculation. Representing Jesus is risky and life-threatening in many areas of our world.

In Canada some consider Christian truth claims repressive, hate-fostering, and arrogant. Christian understanding of God's work in creation critiques essential aspects of the dominant scientific paradigm of natural evolution – this generates animosity within the academic world. The idea that human beings have a basic sin problem and that this explains bad human behaviour contradicts the contemporary view that people are essentially good and given enough guidance and education will function as good people. To argue that there are moral absolutes that society should embrace if people are to enjoy health and harmony is rejected as judgmental and arrogant. Each person, many believe, has a built in moral compass. What is right for them is right, so long as it does not generally harm others. Such contrasts and conflicts face Christians daily as they follow Jesus in our Canadian reality.



Northwest Faculty and Graduates — Northwest@ACTS Graduation 2004

Training ministry leaders who know how to practice Christian discipleship in such settings is complex and challenging. It is not merely a matter of knowledge, nor the acquisition of certain skills. There is a spiritual wisdom that must be learned. People need to discern the spiritual struggle that is being engaged in our culture.

Dan
Chapman
and
Larry
Perkins
discussing
ministry
and
leadership
challenges



Principles of spiritual formation must personally be understood and practiced so that ministry leaders can be examples for other believers. Abilities to lead faith communities to engage christianly with our culture must be developed and honed. A vision for Kingdom living in community with all of its moral and spiritual dimensions requires careful mentoring and deliberate nurture.

Conversations with many Christian ministry leaders, including our alumni and other Seminary leaders, bring us new ideas and new factors to be aware of in training good ministry leaders. Recently, our faculty considered the problem of pornography and its tragic impact upon the lives and ministries of Christian leaders. What can we do to help our students recognize its danger and shield themselves from its impact? Where are we dealing with this question in our teaching and mentoring? We decided it was necessary to do some intentional teaching – devoting a chapel to the spiritual dimension of sexual purity, building into one of our Leadership Seminars a segment on this issue, and making it a topic of discussion within our student ministry affinity groups.

Developing and sustaining healthy marriages and families consistently comes to us a key ministry concern. To help our students and churches learn how to nurture good marriages and strong families we have initiated the Smarter Families Conference. This year it is scheduled for June 3-5. This is a creative way to help our ministry leaders enhance their counseling skills, discern more deeply the challenges affecting families, and learn new ways of ministering to spouses and families.

On Saturday, June 26th we will be introducing a new ministry seminar designed to train people in the skills of mentoring. We believe that nurturing emerging leaders in our local churches will require a new group of mentors in our churches who can come alongside and guide the development of potential ministry leaders.

As you partner with us in prayer and giving, you help us to advance our mission to develop good ministry leaders, the kind that nurture healthy, spiritually strong churches.

Sharing Christ in Europe

The Ministry of a 'Theologian-Pastor'

Small events can be the opening to unexpected opportunities. In 1997 Dr. Archie Spencer wrote a review of Luigi Giussani's book entitled *The Religious Sense*. A year later there was opportunity for a second review of Giussani's *At the Origins of the Christian Claim*. Both were published in the *McMaster Journal of Theology*.

Giussani is a Catholic theologian and thinker who has influenced the lives of hundreds of thousands of young people through his teaching at the University Catholica de Sacre Cor in Milan. Giussani exhibits a profound understanding of the Protestant conception of personal faith, something quite unique for a Catholic theologian. Dr. Spencer recognized this in his reviews of Giussani's books. Giussani founded the Catholic lay movement "Communion and Liberation". A member of this group, Dr. John Zucchi, professor of History at McGill University, invited Dr. Spencer to visit McGill and present in November 2001 a lecture on Giussani's understanding of the church.

Since then Dr. Spencer received an invitation to present other papers to groups in Italy at La Thuile, Milan and Rimini. This past summer he addressed several thousand people on Giussani's understanding of Protestantism in North America, as well as Protestant Ethics and Spirituality. This was part of the largest cultural event in Europe that celebrates Italian culture and religious faith. Over one million people attend. Dr. Spencer interacted with some of the leading academics in Europe, including theologians and scientists. He also shared his faith with young people, challenging them about their commitment to Christ.



Dr. Archie Spencer in Milan

Last Fall, Dr. Spencer was invited to the University Catholica de Sacre Cor in Milan once again. He lectured on the subjects of the church and the Protestant experience of Christ. During this visit he shared his own personal faith and what Christ meant to him with priests, civic leaders and students. Monday evening, during that visit, he gave a public lecture at the Milan Cultural Centre on Giussani's understanding of the human condition and the hope we have in Christ. Several thousand were in attendance. As that evening came to a conclusion a couple hurried down the aisle with a wide smile on their faces. Archie had spoken with them at Rimini several months before about their Christian commitment. They were living together, but not married. They were so excited. "Thank you for praying a blessing on our marriage. We took your advice and got

married." "I was so thankful for this encounter," Archie reports, "because it reminded me that although I am called to be a theologian, I continue to be a pastor. I love what God has called me to do and the way I can share my faith through these opportunities."

Dr. Spencer has accepted another invitation to lecture on Giussani's relation to Protestant Theology at Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland May 12-16. Please pray that God will use this opportunity to bring people to consider the good news of Jesus Christ.

Dr. Archie Spencer is Assistant Professor of Theology and fills the J.B. Pickford Chair of Theology at Northwest Baptist Seminary.

Financial Update

We are thankful to God that the year end (December 31, 2003) financial report showed a small surplus. Thank you for your part in assisting us to achieve our ministry goals. Secondly, our new fiscal year covers the current calendar year (January to December 2004). We are pleased to report the following progress toward our financial goals:

	Goal	Received to April 15, 2004
◆ General Gifts	\$65,000	\$10,712
◆ NCFLD Gifts	\$5,000	\$ 1,000
◆ Financial Aid Fund	\$12,000	\$2,700

Events at NBS@ACTS and Elsewhere

Annual Smarter Families Canada Conference	June 4-5, 2004
FEBBC/Y Annual Convention to be held in Campbell River	June 7-9, 2004
Mentoring in a Changing World (see www.nbseminary.com)	June 26, 2004

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