

December 2007, *Equipping* # 81

## Celebration Story

We invite you to share with your congregation the following story from Neill and Edith von Gunten, Mennonite Church Canada Native Ministries Co-Directors. The story should take no more than 2 minutes to read aloud. You might also wish to include the story in your church newsletter.

### Manitoba, Canada: God Opens Doors

On Sunday, September 16th, the Riverton Fellowship Circle celebrated 10 years of worshipping in their own church building. Between 45 and 50 people gathered for the celebration which more than doubled the number of people who usually worshipped on a Sunday morning.



During the celebration, worshippers sat in a circle symbolizing equality and prayed a “Six Directional Prayer Of Thanks”. This is a prayer acknowledging and giving thanks for the contribution which each of four racial groups has made to the understanding of life and faith. The prayer also recognizes the importance of the earth as the source of our food and directs our attention to God the giver of life and of all that we have.

Neill and Edith von Gunten, Mennonite Church Canada Native Ministries co-directors, were with the congregation when it was established 18 years ago. Neill remembers the beginnings of the church and says, “There is no question of whether the Lord wanted us to have this building. In fact, He opened doors for us that we would have though would be locked against us.” Neill encouraged the congregation during the celebration with the hope that “you feel this same gracious Lord leading you in the coming years as you continue to worship Him in this building and spread His vast love to others around you.”

After the message there was a time of sharing followed by a communion service. Everyone was invited to a potluck meal which gave opportunity for discussion and sharing. The food was delicious and the fellowship around the tables continued long after people had stopped eating.

It is good to celebrate!