



319 MCKENZIE AVENUE, NORTH BAY, ON P1B 7E3
 TEL: (705) 474-3350 FAX: (705) 497-3597

EMAIL: office@manitouconference.ca
 WEB: www.manitouconference.ca

July 3rd 2011 To: Congregations of Manitou Conference
 From: Ted Harrison, Manitou Conference President
 Regarding: Manitou Conference priorities, 2011-2013

Becoming Tomorrow's Church

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

A month ago, delegates from all over northeastern Ontario gathered at Kirkland Lake to do the work of Manitou Conference. One of our important duties was to discern where God is calling our church in this time and place. We gathered with the bittersweet awareness that a nearby United Church—the Swastika Community Church—was immanently closing, on its 100th anniversary.

After that gathering of Conference, many of our ministry personnel were privileged to be on retreat with former Moderator Peter Short, and his partner, Sue. Like a microcosm of the diversity of Christ's church, Sue and Peter are delightfully different. Peter's contemplative introversion is balanced with Sue's gregarious outspokenness. One story that stays with me is from a key moment in their ministry, when Sue told Peter in no uncertain terms, **"Pete, you can be a part of a church that your father would be proud of-- or you can be a part of a church that your daughters are going to need!"**

Sue's words mirrored the visioning that had just happened in our conference visioning exercise. After much wrestling, discussion and prayer, here is how we voice the priorities of our churches for this time and place—

We believe that God's radical hospitality calls Manitou Conference to:

- **Journey into new ways of being church**
- **Understand and engage with our neighbours' struggle for dignity and economic justice**

I believe that these two priorities are very much linked—that is, we will discover new expressions of church only as we open ourselves to the suffering of God's people.

Even as we let go of much of the church which was the pride of our foreparents, we faithfully anticipate the church which will respond with grace to the hungers and hurts of our grandchildren and their world. How we live into this mission will write the story of Manitou in the years ahead.

The role of your President and Executive in the next years is that of vision-keepers. This summer you will begin to receive regular devotionals, communications, and occasional worship resources for use within your church. It is hoped that they will find their way into use with your council, official board, or committees. Together, may we journey into becoming a contemporary and responsive embodiment of the church of Jesus.

Summer blessings to you,

Ted Harrison, on behalf of Manitou Conference

