



“The Cutting Edge of Native Ministry!”



Indigenews

My People International

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My People International

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Remember to check out our new website—
www.mypeopleinternational.com—it's up and running.

We'll have more about upcoming events for you each month as well as bits of news and information from around native North America.

We'll also be posting papers and articles by our staff as well as a devotional series written by the staff to be launched this spring!

Keep watch for changes and updates!



Upcoming Events

Feb. 24-25	Ray addresses the Mennonite Mission Conference in Saskatoon, SK on Native mission
Feb. 23-26	Rick and Linda teach on sexual abuse issues at a conference in Prince George, BC
Mar. 1-3	Rick and Linda lead a volunteer team from Grindstone Valley Bible Church in a children's program and hockey ministry at the International Gospel Jamboree in Muskrat Dam, ON
Mar. 10-11	Terry attends the Lutheran Association board and membership meetings in Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Mar. 17-18	Ray addresses the National Leadership Conference of the Mennonite Central Committee in Manitoba
Mar. 23-25	Terry and Ray attend the Native Ministry Council of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada
March 31	Ray speaks on Native ministry at the “Street Level” Conference in Ottawa, a conference of ministries to the poor and homeless sponsored by the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.
April 2	Terry and Bev host Mi'kmaq elder Roddy Gould who will “officiate” the naming ceremony for their three adult children, Jennifer, Jeanine and Matt
April 21-23	The third First Nations Marriage Encounter, Winnipeg, MB Terry teaches on native mission in Strathmore, AB, at the Evangelical Covenant Church of Canada annual conference
April 25—May 12	Terry returns to the Philippines to teach in preparation for the World Christian Gathering of Indigenous People scheduled for September 11-17, 2006.
April and May	Tim finalizes the details for this years summer camps—we have two scheduled—and works with the staff and our partners for the VBS programs this summer.
May and June	Tim prepares for his wedding to Vivien, July 1, 2006!! Pray for great weather and the many details as Tim's fiancée Vivien travels from Malaysia!

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Hand and Foot

Just this morning I received a call from good friend and long-time fighter for the cause of Native healing in Canada, Elijah Harper. Elijah and I had been together on several trips over the years, seeking to bring a community development focus to Christian ministries in many places. Often, we found ourselves confronting the impacts caused by policies and actions of the past. The litter of broken lives was around us everywhere we went—many times “knee deep.”

Today Elijah wondered about my reaction to a Canadian government announcement about a final settlement for Aboriginal people who had been the victims of government and church run residential schools.. My response was simple: unless the victims have opportunity to be reconciled with the people and events of the past that damaged their lives, no amount of financial compensation would bring the desired relief. Compensation is not at issue—it is warranted, justified and right. But the idea of monetary payout being deemed to bring “closure” is disturbing! Native or not, how can we think that money brings closure when the wounds still gape? The statistics—a few are noted in this issue—suggest something different.

Domestic Violence in Native North America

In a paper presented to the National Injury Prevention Tribal Steering Committee (2003), Dr. Stephanie Wahab notes the following U.S. stats:

- American Indian and Alaskan Native women report much more domestic violence than do women of other races.
- Depending on region, studies show between 46% and 91% of Native women with a history of domestic violence.
- “Internalized oppression” is often cited as having moved

That's why My People International has chosen some of the ministry programs we have.

Whether it's Linda and Rick dealing with youth suicide, Ray and Elaine engaging with survivors of abuse, or Adrian mentoring Native men, we must be there to offer Christ's love in tangible and meaningful ways. We are Christ's

voice in proclaiming the Good News but also his hands offering his healing touch. And as Elaine's own words make clear, we are ourselves vessels of clay being restored to the lives we are intended to live through Jesus!

Thank you for standing with us as we seek to be the hands and feet of Jesus so needed today among Aboriginal people in North America. May our father above richly bless you!



by Terry LeBlanc

The situation is similar in Canada. The Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (2001) shows spousal homicide 8 times higher for Native women and 18 times higher for Native men. The Department of Justice Canada (1999) reports that 25% of Native women and 12% of Native men experience spousal abuse, compared to 8% of women and 7% of men in the general population.

See Elaine Aldred's article for what My People International is doing to help that works.

Open Hearts, Healed Lives

Hi! This is Elaine Aldred. My husband Ray and I work with First Nations people in two major areas: strengthening marriages and families and an approach to healing survivors of abuse.

The abuse training program is designed to help people overcome the trauma of sexual, physical, or emotional abuse. It gives participants the opportunity to begin the healing journey with Christ and then trains them to lead small, biblically-based self-help groups. These small ministry groups provide follow-up support, discipleship, and direction for lives on the mend.

The small groups are a safe place to share vulnerable and painful things. As I have opened up to look into

messy areas of life, others have been there to listen, to challenge me, and to point me to Christ's grace, love, and hope. With the tools I have learned from my own time in a "survivors" group, unhealthy bonds have been broken; unhealthy patterns of reacting and relating have been repaired. God and his people have given me hope on this healing journey. As this healing continues in me, I am better able to reach out to others.

My People International has developed a modified, ESL version of a program developed in the US by Open Hearts Ministries to present to Native People. It is culturally relevant in presentation and content, using illustrations and examples

drawn from Native communities.

My People has sent a number of staff and volunteers through the training necessary to lead groups. Other key Canadian leaders working within the Native community have also begun small groups in their areas. First Nations Community Church in Winnipeg, for example, has sponsored three groups and now hosts an in-depth alumni group which I am beginning to co-lead. Ray will start our first men's group soon.

This fall My People will host a major First Nations-led training event in Winnipeg. Ray and I are excited to be on this path precisely because it goes to the heart of the need in Native people.



Strong marriages equal strong families—and strong families make for a healthy Native church.

That's the goal of SALTS

(Survivors of Abuse

Leadership Training

Seminar) and the Native-

led Marriage Encounter

co-sponsored with the

First Nations Community

Church of Winnipeg!

Thanks for working with us

to make it possible!!

Staff Profile

Ray and Elaine Aldred—Winnipeg, Manitoba

Ray and Elaine have worked in vocational Native ministry since 1991. Their responses to the challenges—abuse, the sense of despair, the frustration of being treated as strangers in your own land—have caused Ray and Elaine to focus on Jesus' words in John 12:26: "Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there my servant will be also."

They began ministry as a pastor couple in a small urban Native Church while Ray served on the committee of the First Nations Alliance Churches of Canada. Becoming Director of these churches in 1996, Ray trained and encouraged pastors ministering to Native people. Together Ray and Elaine focused on helping small Native churches become stable through seminars and teaching on finances, local church government, sermon preparation, and family support.

During the last four years, the Aldreds have helped facilitate a Native focused marriage ministry. The objective is simple: strong marriages and families equal a strong context in which faith and Christian community can grow. As a member of the Swan River Cree Nation, Ray and Elaine model what they teach. They have a passion to help as many Native people as possible to hear the gospel in their heart language and note that "We want to empower people by creating settings where they can encounter God and become all that God created them to be."

Ray is board chair of the Native Ministries Council for the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada; a board member of the North American Institute for Indigenous Theological studies, and contributing editor of *Cultural Encounters*, a new journal from Multnomah College. He is currently working on his PhD through the London School of Theology.

Ministry Highlights—November 2005 through January 2006

- Indigenous people from Kenya and Mexico shared with Ray about how they were encouraged to see First Nations people in Canada and the U.S. leading the way in dealing with issues of historic and on-going colonialism
- Ray started a youth worship team at First Nations Community Church in Winnipeg.
- Tim is busy coordinating volunteers for this year's VBS, sports camps, work projects and admin. support.
- The audio version of the Mohawk translation of Esther is being edited by our associ-

ates, at the Mohawk Translation Team—great progress!

- Terry, with other Native Christian leaders initiated a Native approach to Christian worship as an outreach effort in the Edmonton area.

- Linda led an abuse workshop in Thunder Bay, ON, teaching from a faith perspective how to deal with hurts and help others.

- Rick brought a Native hockey team to the M.C. Frey Tournament in Kitchener, ON. They made it to the semi-finals; a powerful time of ministry and relationship

building.

- Terry taught for two weeks in the Philippines on indigenous theology in preparation for the 6th World Christian Gathering on Indigenous People in Sept. 2006. Terry will be leading a team to participate.

- Terry met in Ottawa with Native Christian leaders from across Canada to pray and discuss how to work together more effectively.

- MPI Staff were blessed and inspired by connecting with supporters at My People's informational Dessert Evenings last fall.



Sharing a meal in the Arctic as we plan for the training of native men and women for ministry

Please Pray:

- For the safety of Ray and Elaine's son, Reuben, who has moved to northern Alberta to work on an oil rig.
- For no glitches as the first year VBS curriculum is being revised at the printers for its scheduled late March release.
- For Terry as he prepares for his PhD qualifying exams during the next several weeks.
- For the upcoming meeting of the Canadian Aboriginal Ministries Council in Winnipeg March 22-24.
- For the Native pastors and leaders with whom the Martins minister.
- For Ray and Elaine as they are pulling together the team for the Marriage Encounter weekend scheduled April 21-23. This outreach is a partnership between My People and First Nations Community Church in Winnipeg, MB.
- For funding for the Marriage Encounter weekend, which will be about \$20,000.
- That we will find effective places and situations for vol-

unteers to share the Good News with people.

- Ray's meeting with U.S. and Canadian Mennonite leaders on leadership development and aboriginal issues.

- For safe travel and God's blessing on upcoming speaking events.

- Please continue to pray about the youth suicide crisis in the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation. Between Christmas and mid-January, there were four youth suicides in the community of Píkangikum



We are thankful that Jesus holds all our lives and the entirety of creation on his shoulders!!!

Staying Connected

- If you would like to have Dancing the Way visit your church, or if you would like to know where the group is scheduled to appear, please get in touch.
- Christian people with counseling training can contact the Martins if they would like to help.
- Let us know if you would like to help with special events.
- If your church or school is having a missions/ministry conference that you would like My People to participate in, please call or write.
- If you would like to host an informational dessert evening at your church next fall, please let us know.
- If you have friends whom you think might be interested in what My People Interna-

tional is doing, please tell them about us. Feel free to request brochures or extra copies of our newsletter.

- Check out our new website at www.mypeopleinternational.com for updates, pictures, and additional information.