



Indigenews

My People International

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Ministry in Context

If are one of our US supporters, you may not have heard anything about the current situation near Caledonia, Ontario (about 60 miles from Niagara Falls); if you are Canadian, it has been a regular news item for you. But you still may not know the story or its history. You may also not be aware just how common conflict over historical treaty issues is in both Canada and the US.

In this issue we felt it important to bring a perspective to the Caledonia treaty dispute you would not otherwise get. In part it is because our own staff, Adrian Jacobs, is himself a member of the Six Nations community. In part we wanted to help you become more familiar with the challenging contexts in which the day-to-day issues of our own people and communities confront us and in which we must minister the gospel of reconciliation.

We find many times the hope of Jesus, so clear in Luke 4:18ff, is not easily embraced by our own people. Frequently it is because of on-going conflicts such as this one—rooted in issues of the combined experience of colonialism and forced Christianization. On occasions such as this one, however, we are encouraged that the wider church has understood and now stands with us.

The story in a nutshell goes like this: The Canadian government “sold” land under dispute—land which formed part of its treaty with the Six Nations Reserve—and a developer has begun constructing a subdivision of luxury homes. In February, a group of Iroquoian clan mothers decided to take action. They began occupying the land, and shut down the construction. Since then, the land has been continuously “occupied” by 15 to 100 people at a time.

The developer obtained a court order to evict them. On April 20, two hundred riot police—armed with assault rifles, tasers, tear gas and billy clubs—raided the occupation at 4:30 a.m. The small group in occupation, including a 77-year-old traditional leader, were arrested in minutes, the elder nearly having his shoulder broken in the process.

Within an hour, hundreds of people from the community arrived. The women locked arms and, with the men standing behind them, walked the police backward off the land. The residents blocked the roadway with a barricade of tires, gravel and a burning van.

The whole community came together—Christians of different denominations including Baptists, Pentecostals and others—as well as traditional Longhouse people. The occupation continues to the time of this writing, and a fire burns continually. Early in May, riot police were again present, due to rumours of an impending Ku Klux Klan meeting.

How do we respond as Christians to such a situation? Local My People staffer Adrian Jacobs (himself a Cayuga man from this reserve) answers, “With compassion, we need to step in, in the Name of Jesus.”

Nine Caledonia area pastors invited Adrian to speak at their May 10 meeting and share the Six Nations’ story. One pastor said he would rather lose his church building than his relationships with Six Nations people. Another offered to pay an occupancy tax to the tribe. And the Aboriginal Ministries Council of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada has sent an open letter of support for the Six Nations to the Canadian Government. (*See inside*)

Adrian requests prayer: for protection for all involved; for a fair resolution of the conflict; and for mercy for all.

- Gina Merritt with Terry LeBlanc

The History of the Grand River Treaty

1784—Land awarded to the Six Nations in reparation for their New York lands lost as a result of the American Revolution. Chief Joseph Brant leases the land and the tribe receives some income.

1841/43—The Superintendent of Indian Affairs sells the land without the knowledge or consent of the tribe. The Canadian government condemns and removes him

from office, but does nothing about the corrupt act. The people who had leased the land cut all the trees down and use the money from the sale of the lumber to pay for the land. (*cont'd inside*)

History of the Grand River Treaty Cont'd

- The tribe is never paid for the sale.
- In 1924, Chief Deska:eh protests to the League of Nations.
- During the 1970s, the issue was taken to the United Nations.
- Since the current conflict, the clan mothers have taken it to the UN in Switzerland.
- The tribe asks the government for an accounting of the money, which should have been put into a trust. Estimated value: \$40 – 300 billion.
- The tribe's ownership of the land, and all subsequent transactions are documented in the Canadian government archives.
- The tribe didn't drop the ball—according to attorney Lonnie Bomberry, 17,000 documents pertaining to this have been presented to the government.



Staff Profile: Adrian Jacobs

I have known Adrian for over a dozen years now. We have walked in a covenant relationship as Native men for almost as many. In fact, it was the loss to ministry of a close friend—someone who had struggled so much without support—that forged our decision to be more diligent in our effort to “be there for one another.” It has been a tremendously important commitment for each of us over the years since.

Adrian lives and works out of Brantford, ON where, in addition to parenting five children ages 10 through 17, he devotes his ministry time to mentoring Native men of the Iroquoian communities around the Great Lakes, consulting with the Mohawk community Bible translation project My People helped inaugurate and writing materials for ministry (see side-bar opposite page). He is a well recognized resource to the Native ministry community of North America, having published many of his writings and resource booklets dealing with practical as well as the more theologically-focused issues encountered in Native ministry and mission.

Having completed his initial studies for ministry at Rhema Bible College in Oklahoma, Adrian is currently working in a part-time distance education program toward completion of a MA in Mission from Fuller seminary in California. He pioneered and pastored a church on his home reserve, Six Nations of the Grand River, which continues today, served with the Wesleyan church as the Director for Native American Ministries and, these last four years has developed the men's mentoring program of ministry with My People International and our partner, The Lutheran Assoc. in the US, with whom he is also preparing to undertake a short-course of ministry study.

Adrian brings a wealth of experience, training and commitment to the ministry. It would be hard to imagine anyone more qualified to do what he does with My People International. Please remember to pray for him and his children: David, Christopher, Anna, Erica and Jesse.

- Terry LeBlanc

*“With compassion,
we need to step in,
in the Name of
Jesus.”*

- Adrian Jacobs



Adrian Jacobs—the challenge of enabling Native men to regain a healthy life takes him many places as he incarnates Jesus among them.

April 27, 2006

An Open Letter of Support to the People of the Six Nations of the Grand River, the Hereditary Chiefs, Clan Mothers, Councilors and Spiritual Leaders

With a Call to Her Majesty Elizabeth II Queen of Canada, the Governor General Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, the Prime Minister of Canada the Right Honourable Stephen Harper, and the Minister of Indian Affairs the Honourable Jim Prentice

We, the members of the Aboriginal Ministries Council of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, stand with the People of Six Nations in their desire to bring fair and equitable resolution to their land claim in the present dispute in Caledonia, Ontario. We call on the Federal Government of Canada to do all in its power to ensure the Six Nations People and their lands are cared for and protected from any and all encroachments past and present, and to rectify any historical deficiency in its handling of these lands. Any judicial or enforcement authority governing with lesser authority must serve the intent and spirit of the Nation to Nation treaty relationship which Six Nations has with the Queen of Canada as her allies.

Our prayer in this is simple: "May the Creator of all men, the Lord of Borders who commanded people to never move the boundary markers of the vulnerable, bring justice, equity, and a fair resolution to the present conflict between the Six Nations people and the People of Canada. In the Name of Jesus Christ may it be so."

Sincerely,

Ray Aldred—Cree—My People International

Terry LeBlanc—Mi'kmaq/Acadian—My People International

Cheryl Bear-Barnetson—Yinka Dene—Foursquare Church of Canada

Elaine MacNeish—Ojibway—All for Jesus Ministries

Bruce C. Brown—Haida—Vancouver Native Pentecostal Church

Wendy Peterson—Metis—Providence College and Seminary

Mavis Etienne—Mohawk—Mohawk Bible Translation Project

Dean Shingoose—Saulteaux—Calgary Native Pentecostal Church

Adrian Jacobs—Cayuga—My People International

Larry Wilson—Cree—Director, First Nations Alliance Churches of Canada

A Ministry Highlight

Mohawk Territory Translation work —MPI

All of the New Testament, except for II Corinthians, was translated into Mohawk in the 1800s. A few years ago, a group of Mohawk people decided a new translation was needed, one not written in "King James Mohawk."

Mavis Etienne, a drug and alcohol counselor, is the chairperson of the translation team. Harvey Gabriel, an elder at Oka United Church, is

the main translator. Many other Mohawk elders are involved in the translation work.

The translation process is slow with many steps. Books completed so far include Daniel, Jonah, Ruth, and II Corinthians. Many other books are in various stages of the process.

This project belongs to the Mohawk people, not to any outside organization; but MPI was part of

The Aboriginal Ministries Council of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada

its genesis and continues to fulfill a vital role. MPI staffer Tim Stime was brought in to facilitate the project because of his background in translation work with Wycliffe and his knowledge of linguistics. MPI associate Celine Genest knows Mohawk, works with the orthography, and is the current facilitator. Adrian Jacobs also reads Mohawk and serves as a consultant.

See Translation, P. 4

Please Pray

One of our Dancing the Way team members, Darin Cadman, lives on a reservation in Montana. His eight-year-old son, Darin Jr., has a severe gastrointestinal problem, incompletely diagnosed. In the course of the last month, he has been to the emergency room four times and more frequently to the clinic.

The only way to diagnose the problem fully is with an endoscopy, but Indian Health Services either can't or won't authorize it. With no other health insurance, Darin and his wife can only treat the problem with Tums and Maalox.

Please pray for little Darin.

You may also want to take the opportunity to help:

If you would like to contribute toward the \$2100 cost of this procedure, you can do so through Darin's church, the Mission Mountain Worship Center, Box 678, St. Ignatius, MT 59865.

Make cheques payable to the church. Please note on the cheque that it is for the Cadmans.

“Discipleship at the Roots!”

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**Don't forget to check out our
website—**

www.mypeopleinternational.com

Dancing The Way begins its sixth summer tour of ministry to reservations, communities and churches May 26th and runs through to June 4th.

(Translation, cont'd from p. 3)

Both Catholic and Protestant Churches have contributed financially to the project. The Canadian Bible Society has provided funds and published the books completed so far.

If you would like more information about the Mohawk Bible Translation Project, please contact MPI and we will email or snail mail it to you.

- Gina Merritt

Some Upcoming Events

Dancing the Way

- May 28 - Burlington, Wisconsin—St. John's Episcopal
- May 29 LaPorte, Indiana--The Vineyard
- May 30 Madison, Wisconsin—Madison House of Prayer
- May 31 Minneapolis, Minnesota—Little Earth Gym
- June 1 Peru, Illinois—Eagle Rock Christian Center
- June 2 Wheaton, Illinois—Karitos Christian Arts Festival, Wheaton College
- June 3 Wheaton, Illinois—Karitos
- June 4 Waukesha, Wisconsin—River of Life Church.

Other Activities

- June 22-24 NAIITS Symposium, Asbury Seminary, Asbury, Kentucky
- July 10 -15 Ray Aldred teaching at Vancouver School of Theology, University of British Columbia, on “the resurrection of story”
Canada.

