



Indigenews

My People International

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Tradition and Ministry

This past weekend, our three children received names as adult Mi'kmaq. For several years now we have been thinking and praying about this time and the best way to accomplish it. We wanted to honour our cultural heritage, but make it clear in doing so, that we are followers of the Jesus Way. So it was that on Sunday the 19th of November, Bev and I, together with many of our friends and extended family, came before the Lord to recognize the gift of our children which God had given us.

We named our children with names which captured the best of who they have been in their lives thus far in such a way as to draw them prophetically into the years ahead. It was done in the best way of the traditions of our ancestors but it was also clearly Christian. It honoured our heritage but focused people's attention on Jesus Christ and the teachings of scripture. In short, we modified traditional understandings and practices to provide a meaningful context for ministry.

Traditions, such as the naming ceremony we created, which I mention above, are useful means of communicating the grace of God. In fact, it could be said that without the connecting points which traditions in a given culture provide, we communicate only dead orthodoxy as it came to be represented in another culture's traditions—not the Gospel. In consequence, there is no tug at the heart, only a mental embrace of someone else's experience of truth. A careful exami-

nation of church history will find this to have been true many times.

That's why we use approaches such as Dancing the Way as one of our strategies of ministry. It builds bridges for the Gospel, in the language of the heart—people's culture. Traditional music and dance, blended with contemporary music, a biblically-rooted narrative and choreography is used to communicate a biblical message in a culturally meaningful way. And, it works! The Holy Spirit speaks to people's hearts and minds the Good News of Jesus. It preaches the same message but it does so dramatically differently.

This past year has witnessed many people impacted by Dancing the Way and the message—on reserves, reservations and even cross-culturally in churches. If you think your community or church might benefit from our team, contact us to see if we might be able to come your way.

- Terry LeBlanc



Part of Our New Context

As of October 31, we became a fully self-supporting mission! Our US partner has, over the past few years been withdrawing their financial contribution to our ministry (initially at 100% when we started 6 years ago) and we have been working to

pick up the financial slack.

While the US partner has indicated they would like to support a few of the staff for a while yet, this will be as a donor to the ministry. This new context of

our relationship will stretch us but we are confident that, with your continued support and the development of new partners, we will continue to flourish in the work.

(cont'd on back page)

Did you Know?

Not all tribal dances are religious as some might think. In fact, you would most likely never get an opportunity to witness religious dances of a given tribe as they are reserved for the tribal “initiated” and are not for public display.

Dances you might see at a powwow for example, are simply reflections of a social, moral or spiritual teaching choreographed in dance so as to communicate and affirm a message. The men’s Northern Traditional style, for example, usually reflects one or two themes of life—the hunt for food or a search for one’s enemy. In the former, the motions and gestures of the dancer accentuate the elements of the hunt as the hunter seeks his quarry in order to provide food for his family and people. The dance is respectful of the creation, acknowledging the interconnectedness of life—it is not about sport! In the second theme the warrior searches out the enemy, wary of the possibility of attack from any direction. The dancer communicates consciousness of the challenges of life which can easily overcome us if we are not careful. In the Woman’s Jingle Dress dance, the dancer prays for healing, each step a prayer and each cone on the dress a reminder to pray daily. In the Woman’s Traditional Dance, we are presented with a dance of dignity—the dignity of human life. It is women, after all, whom our Creator has given the ability to bring new life into the world! Each step, taken in humility, reminds us to appreciate their role in our world, our community and our families.

Taken together, dances which are a regular part of most powwows, in addition to providing enjoyment for people, communicate life-messages, keeping teachings alive in each generation. They speak volumes about living life in a good way!

- Terry LeBlanc

Assoc Staff Profile: Darin Cadman

Darin and Lisa Cadman live and work in Polson, MT on the Flathead Reservation. Darin is Kickapoo and Dine (Navajo) and Lisa is Blackfeet and Mexican. Married 15 years, they have two children, Rocky and Darin Jr. Rocky, the eldest, is 14, and in her first year of high school. An active evangelist, she is a very fine up-and-coming Jingle Dress dancer, accompanying the Dancing The Way (DTW) tour twice now. Darin Jr. is 9, loves electronic games and gadgets and aspires to be a Grass Dancer in the coming year. To help him reach that goal, Darin Sr. and Lisa are preparing an outfit for him.

Darin has been involved with My People since 2003 when he joined Dancing the Way. Darin and Lisa have a passion for youth—a passion which springs from Darin’s own story of wrong direction as a young man which landed him in jail. Darin volunteers as youth pastor for the church they attend, a position which has provided Darin opportunity to share his story with many young people on and off the reservation.

Darin’s keen interest is in sharing his story—a powerful testimony of God’s grace in action in the life of a young man who, many people might believe, had little to live for after the tragic death of a friend on Flathead Lake. The tragic incident which left Darin facing a manslaughter charge also left him little hope for a decent future—at least as it might be thought in human terms. But God was not finished with Darin—in fact, God had only begun to work the miracle that would become Darin’s life. While in jail, Darin met Jesus who effected a powerful transformation in him. The formerly angry and bitter Darin became a model for all in prison—so much so that he was granted early release. Now, these many years later Darin is a model for others—particularly youth—of what God can do.

In February of 2007, Darin is planning to begin his MA in Christian Leadership at the North American Baptist Seminary in Sioux falls, SD. He will be focusing on indigenous and intercultural aspects of leadership. Darin will be enrolled through a program partnership with NAIITS (North American Institute for indigenous Theological Studies) and will be mentored through the degree by some of our staff and others in the NAIITS partnership. What a testament of grace!!

- Terry LeBlanc



Photo courtesy of Katie Blanchard

Healing from Abuse: Learning to Live Again

From March 17 – 24, the Aldreds and the Martins will lead a seminar to train people in small group ministry for abuse issues. Called E-nen-neh-moon Circle (Cree for “How your feelings from your heart”), participants will learn how talking from their hearts is key to moving past the abuses of the past. They will also receive training on how to lead a small group that can become a safe place for people to share their pain, and begin to dream what it would be like to trust again. After the training, people can take this transferable teaching back to their communities.

The program is designed to help people overcome the trauma of sexual, physical or emotional abuse. It gives them the opportunity to begin the healing journey with Christ. The small groups provide follow-up support, discipleship, and direction, and are a safe place to share vulnerable and painful things and help one another regain hope. The seminar is scheduled for Spring 2007 in Winnipeg, MB.

If you would like to attend the seminar, please contact Ray and Elaine Aldred at MPI for further details:

Ray and Elaine Aldred
265 Glenwood Cres.
Winnipeg MB R2L 1K3
204-663-4898
ray051@mts.net

Some Ministry & Staff Highlights

Missio Dei—Nashville, TN

In early November Ray, Terry and Adrian spoke at a conference entitled “Missio Dei” - Mission of God. They each presented a plenary on theological perspectives of First Nations people. Two comments captured the impact. The first is from a professor of Historical Theology at an evangelical seminary:

“I pray that God will continue to open doors for you and your colleagues. What you are doing is without a doubt the work of God in the earth.” K.E.A.

And, from the former dean of another major evangelical seminary:

Dear Terry:

It was so good to be with you and your colleagues for the Missio Dei Gathering in Nashville. I have told several people that the best set of presentations I’ve heard in a long

time were the ones you and your colleagues gave. D.W.

What an encouragement for our work of teaching, training and equipping Native people!

Dessert Evenings

This fall, My People held 15 dessert evenings across the US and Canada. It was a wonderful opportunity to spend time with old friends and meet new ones.

Two Native university students who were not Christians attended one of the events. One said this was the first time she’d ever heard anything positive from Christians about being Indian. The other was greatly touched by a song about Jesus that Terry and Ray sang and offered them a gift in the traditional way, asking for permission to sing it. Please pray for these two young people!

Prayer Needs

-The Aboriginal Ministries Council meeting December 8-10 in Ottawa, ON. Ray, Terry and Adrian will be participating

-Ray and Elaine, Terry and Bev (wives are also being paid for by IVCF!) as they travel to St. Louis to teach at Urbana.

-The staff and associates as they seek some down-time during the Christmas period.

Ray and Elaine Aldred

Terry & Bev LeBlanc

Adrian Jacobs

Rick and Linda Martin

Tim and Wong Yin Mooi Stime

Anita Keith

Céline and Hector Bastien Genest

Wes and Summer Graham

Darin and Lisa Cadman

Gina and Rob Merritt

Dorothy Wright

Dale Hunter

US Nonprofit Status

My People International has finally received its 501(c)3 IRS designation letter. The letter was delayed a very long time, in part because of the huge number of new nonprofits formed in response to Hurricane Katrina. On the plus side, our tax deductible designation is retroactive to November 9, 2000. This means that all gifts US donors have EVER given to MPI are tax deductible in the US.

Mr. & Mrs. Stime!

Tim and Yin Mooi took a delayed honeymoon to Whistler, BC. Friends gifted them with the use of a condo there, and the Stimes had an awesome time visiting with friends and supporters in Osoyoos and Fruitvale, BC enroute!

-The staff meeting January 12-14 in Winnipeg, MB. Staff will be planning next steps in light of the changes brought by the loss of support from the Lutheran Association in the US.

-The My People International Board meeting February 1-3 to be held on Whidbey Island at a retreat centre provided to My People for our use at no charge!

-Terry speaking at the Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast May 2007.

—Linda Martin and colleague Selma Poulin, for wisdom, safety and strength as they travel to Smithers, BC, to lead a workshop on the impact of sexual abuse.

“Person-centered Discipleship—Keeping the Message Real!”

My People International

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**We're trying to keep our
website updated more
regularly now so check it out—
www.mypeopleinternational.com**

Some Upcoming Events

Year-end gifts

Your gifts received or postmarked by December 31 will be receipted for tax purposes whether in the US or in Canada. If you would like to make a year-end gift, please keep this in mind.

Other Activities

Dec. 7—Terry and Ray at the Aboriginal Ministry Council Meeting of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada

Dec. 27-Jan 1—Ray and Terry will be teaching and speaking once again at Urbana—InterVarsity Christian Fellowship's triennial missions conference held for the first time this year in St. Louis.

January 3-5—Ray speaking at the 617 Network Conference of the Salvation Army; Atlanta, GA

January 19-21—Linda leading a workshop on the impact of sexual abuse; Smithers, BC

January 28-29—Ray speaking at InterVarsity retreat weekend; Paris, ON

January 30—Ray speaking at Life on the Vine Christian & Missionary Alliance Church; Long Grove, IL

January 31—Ray speaking at North Park University; Chicago, IL

February 2-4—Rick and Linda speaking to Native high school students about teen sexuality and the impact of sexual abuse; Dryden, ON

February 14-16—Rick and Linda conducting a seminar for churches on the impact of unresolved abuse issues; Riverton and Manigotogan, MB

May 2-3—Terry has been invited to speak at the Parliamentary prayer breakfast May 2, 3, 2007.

Our New Context *(cont'd)*

You can help make that possible by continuing to spread the word about the ministry of My People International to family and friends.

We'd like to help you do that. If you feel some of the folks you know would be interested in us, let us know and we'll send them an info packet and mention your name (or not, if you prefer).

In the US, contact Gina at:

robuserid@prodigy.net

In Canada, talk to Tim at:

timsmpi@cruzinternet.com

THE LAST MONTHLY LETTER AND THIS ISSUE OF THE NEWSLETTER HAVE BEEN DELAYED DUE TO SEVERAL FACTORS WHICH CONSPIRED TO IMPACT TIMING -THE PRINTSHOP HAVING TECHNICAL DIFFICULTY, NOT THE LEAST. PLEASE ACCEPT OUR APOLOGIES.