



Indigenews

My People International

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Mon Peuple—MPI en Francais !

A very much needed, often absent facet of Native North American ministry is in the French language. Whether it's the Cajun-blended tribes of the territory of the Louisiana Purchase who still speak French or, the Mi'kmaq, Malecite, Cree or Algonquin of New Brunswick and Quebec, it is an often over-looked and sorely needed area of ministry. Associate staff Céline Genest, her husband Hector, and volunteers Daniel LaCasse and Francine LeMay, recently promoted My People's ministry to the Native community "en Francais" (in French)!! Here are a few "bytes" from their report...

"We were quite happy with the way things went this weekend. Although they said it was quieter than usual this year, we still had a fairly steady stream of people coming by. We handed out quite a few flyers both in French and English to people who were just curious. I had prepared an information sheet that contained more information that we gave to people who showed a greater amount of interest.

Twice I had some Anglophone young people ask me if we accepted volunteers for anything, so I gave them the Indigenews newsletter and showed them the contact information there for the summer camps. Some people wanted to know if we went into the Native communities here in Quebec. Each time we explained that the focus of MPI was in training Native people (capacity building) in a culturally relevant way. Many people thought this was very interesting. I was also able to mention the Mohawk translation project and many people found that interesting as well.

There was also a book table right across from us and when it was quiet Saturday evening the man that was there started asking us questions. He was from the Association of Evan. Baptist Ch. and he said that he heard

a speaker say that the churches needed to start to think about reaching out to the Native communities, but that was all he knew about it, but that's what got him interested in what we were doing.

We had conversations with people on many different levels."

- Celine Genest with Terry LeBlanc

Our Deepest Thanks...

Gina Merritt, who has coordinated the Dancing the Way ministry since its birth, administered our US operations and served as a friend to many in Native ministry leaves this post after 6 years of dedicated, volunteer service. Gina graduated with her Masters in non-profit management last spring and has been looking for a paid position which will allow her to continue her love for service to people.



position which will allow her to continue her love for service to people.

We are saddened at the loss but wish her great success in all her pursuits. Please keep her in prayer. Thanks Gina!

- Terry LeBlanc and the rest of the MPI staff

PLEASE NOTE with Gina's departure our new USA Mailing Address is:

PO BOX 130061
St. Paul, MN 55113-0001

Inside this issue...

Emergence...The next generation of leaders begin to shape a vision

Inenimowin Reports...the multiplication factor becomes evident

Weather is always a factor...Muskrat folks kept on the ground

Dancing the Way again...The dance team continues with new leadership

Stories of hope...

October 15-19 My People hosted our third Inenimowin Circle program. Almost all our staff have been trained in the program and its delivery. Stories of hope abound after each. Here are a few comments from our staff after this most recent Inenimowin...

“Personally I enjoyed the wide range of men in our group. Some were already Christian leaders and others were just starting on their journey. I was not sure if one man was even a follower of Jesus or if he had yet made a commitment of faith. The truth is I believe he is much closer to faith in Christ now than when he came. He was very difficult at first but by the end of the week he had really softened. I believe the lectures and talks in the main sessions impacted him in a powerful, powerful way.” - Rick

“The truth is there is a story here. This is one guy I would have question being there. He was from Vancouver and had lived a life of residential school and prison. A native man, who has much to be bitter about, and yet I believe seeing us all being vulnerable as well as the teaching sessions really moved in his life. By the last session he was very much a part of the circle and I believe God used this experience in a very important way in his life.” - Ray

“We, the women, had a bit of a situation in our hands at the beginning of our training time. 5 of the women in our group thought they were coming to a teaching (workshop) on Native History... We, the group leaders, had to somehow convince them that this could be part of their learning and understanding of how they can help Native people. My talk to these 5 women in our group time was [concerning the fact] that any church needs to understand the kind of social issues that my people group are struggling with in order to be effective in their work with them—and that this seminar was one way of coming to an understanding of why Native people struggle instead of just saying that alcohol is the problem . . . that there are root causes of all the dysfunction that we see on the surface.” - Linda

Emergence:

At the 7th World Christian Gathering of Indigenous People, The next generation of leaders stood to be recognized. After a rousing presentation, on the closing day, of traditional culture, music and language blended with the more contemporary, the elder generations applauded with great enthusiasm and pride. It was not the performance of the presentation about which they were excited—it was the fact that the next generation had stepped-up to begin to take leadership of the ministry to Indigenous people—not just through the WCGIP but back home as well.

MPI is playing a significant role in supporting and nurturing this exciting step forward as IGX (what it is, for the moment known by) gets its feet into the stream of leadership in ministry. You will have noticed the reports of the past several months as a small team travelled to gather necessary information so as to launch this initiative in a good way.



As the movement goes forward, they will be looking for support in the form of on-going sponsorship and grants for start-up. We'll devote more space to this encouraging development over the next months.

In the meantime, please pray for Larissa, Matt, Hannah, Leon, Mattias, Daniel, John and Sarah and others in the background.

- Terry LeBlanc

Quotables...

"To dance is to pray, to pray is to heal, to heal is to give, to give is to live, to live is to dance."

~ Mari Jo Moore ~

Highlights

Weathered in— Muskrat Dam, ON

This just in from Rick and Linda Martin:

"Terry, I need to tell you that we had a very disappointing weekend in that the Muskrat people who were coming down to the Grindstone church got weathered in. The planes could not fly and so they did not make it to Sioux Lookout for the plane to Toronto (Ice snow etc.). In fact the planes were not flying for a day and a half or so and they couldn't get out at all in time to make the training workshop that Grindstone had set up in Waterdown. So we got down here in Southern Ontario but they did not."

The trip was part of the Grindstone church's commitment to our small but growing ministry partnerships with churches to engage with communities in ministry which fall outside MPI's main areas of focus. It was intended to train Sunday School teachers for the Anglican church in the Muskrat Dam community. While a deep disappointment to all, we look forward to it being rescheduled in the New Year.

Inenimowin Circle—Rocky Mountain House, AB

Our third training Inenimowin workshop week went ahead October 15-19. Sixteen participants from the US and Canada including five from one of our other partner churches, People's Church of Toronto, were put through a challenging, life-changing five days of training. By the end of the week, what appeared to some of the participants at first to be an insurmountable, emotionally exhausting issue, was unpacked in a sensitive, supportive way such that all were better equipped to help others through the pain of abuse.

Ray Aldred, co-facilitator of the program, noted,

"Within a week of the completion of training, two Native men from East Hastings in downtown Vancouver, supported by a local church, were reviewing all the material in preparation for offering a talking circle on abuse for Native people on the street. What makes it amazing is that one of these two men is, himself, on the street, the other is only recently housed!"

Up-and-coming

Suicide DVD / Workshop—Seattle, WA; Brantford, ON

In light of the pre-release response to the suicide DVD project, MPI is in the early stages of developing a workshop or workshop series to assist Native community members in dealing more effectively with the suicide issue in Native communities. The workshop (s) are expected to be available in mid-2009.

Little Earth—Minneapolis, MN

Terry will be visiting Minneapolis and Little Earth (an urban reservation) in the next few days to look over the ministry opportunities there with a view to bringing either an Inenimowin Circle or a Nēstooāak training event there in 2009. He will also be working with our associates to develop a more wide-spread ministry partnership in the Twin Cities during 2009. (Thanks Ron and Donna; Laurie and John; Jim and Sonja!!!!)

Dancing the Way— Calgary, AB; Browning, MT

MPI is pleased to announce that after a year off, seeking on-going leadership for the ministry, Dancing the Way is being renewed under the leadership of Nicole Yellow Old Woman of the Siksika First Nation. The team will continue to be a presentation team for reserve, reservation and church ministry based in both Canada and the US. At present, one team will be available but the expectation is that by the end of 2009, two teams will be ready to tour as before, on occasional full tours and by-invitation events. Joining Nicole is her sister-in-law, Vanessa and Sandra Crazy Bull. To book the team or, if interested in helping out, contact Terry @ 780.727.4522 or tlmikmaq@gmail.com

Prayer Needs

⇒ ... for the debrief and planning meeting Dec. 13 for Kids Culture Camp leadership. We will determine the nature and direction of camps at this time. Pray for discernment and wisdom.

⇒ ... once again for the IGX youth initiative as the emerging team of leaders meet in New Zealand over the next months to plan its course. Pray also for grants which have been applied for.

⇒ ... for the MPI staff meeting scheduled for January 15-18, 2009.

⇒ ... for increased funding for My People International. We have had a stretch this summer to accommodate all the work which has gone on and are in need of some new funds to cover program costs.

⇒ ... for some down-time for the staff over Christmas—we all need it very much.

⇒ ... for a positive response to the Suicide DVD as we release and distribute it in the coming weeks.

⇒ ...for a development person for MPI's funding and donor development.

“Person-Centered Ministry— The Message in Context!”

My People International

P.O. Box 295
Evansburg, AB T0E 0T0
Canada
Ph 780-727-4522
Fax 780-727-4523
timsmpi@cruzinternet.com

PO BOX 130061
St. Paul, MN 55113-0001
USA

**PLEASE NOTE: our new US
Mailing Address**

Check out our website!

**www.
mypeopleinternational.com**

Our Vision?

Our vision is a simple one.
It is that:

“Every Native North American person will embrace a life-giving relationship with the person of Jesus – and experience that relationship in a Native North American Way.”

Our mission?

“To communicate the teachings of Jesus to Native North American people in a culturally relevant way; to encourage Native North American life to be centred in a spiritual relationship with Jesus; and, to facilitate culturally appropriate participation of Native people within the wider community of those who follow Jesus.”

Ministry Developments

Some key needs have been observed over the last few years as we have travelled and shared Jesus with people in Native North America. The depth of pain and suffering related to grief, loss, residential schools, hopelessness and cultural collapse was overwhelming. In our efforts to respond, we found new ministry methods emerging. We soon took note that most of them called us to greater and greater teaching, training and mentoring roles. Yes, we still shared Jesus and saw people come to faith but we realized the old methods of evangelism and discipleship needed to be overhauled to deal with the social and spiritual complexity we increasingly encountered. So, that’s what we have done.

Emerging from the past three years’ ministry assessment have been four main tracks for our ministry:

Inenimowin— “Speaking from Our Hearts” - a training program to deal with abuse issues

Něstooàak— “We are Capable” - building the ministry capacity of Native ministry

Suicide prevention/intervention - Assisting men and women in Native communities to deal with the crisis of youth suicide

Men’s mentoring - Bridging the loss of men’s traditional roles with open, honest conversation about being a man and Native

*And, of course, **Dancing the Way** and **Kids Culture Camp**.*

We’ll say more about each in the month’s ahead. Keep connected...

Dates and Events ...

Upcoming Staff Dates (see the website for more details)

November 23—27 Christian Camping International Convention—**Terry is the closing plenary speaker**

December 5 Terry speak at the Vancouver Club

December 5 Businessman’s Breakfast Fundraiser—Vancouver Club

January 15—18 MPI Staff Meeting

Training Events—Dates and Places...

April 5-9, 2009—Inenimowin Circle—Winnipeg, MB

April 16-19, 2009—Něstooak—Sioux Falls, SD

June 4-6, 2009—NAITS symposium. The theme: “Indigenous Church: Expressions of Community.”