



Indigenews

My People International

Summer 2006
Volume II, Issue I

Board of Directors

Rev. Dean Shingoose (Salteaux)
Chair; Pastor, Calgary, AB

Rita Bear Gray (Cree) Vice-Chair;
Program Coordinator, Muckleshoot
Band, Auburn, WA

Frank Bucholtz, Treasurer; Free-
lance Writer Surrey, BC

Rev. Dr. Evert Busink, Secretary;
Pastor, Brandon, MB

Dr. Lee Griffin, Psychiatrist
Port Angeles, WA

Debbie McNeil (Nisga'a)
Home School Coordinator
Gitwinksihkw, BC

Bill Ruthford, Attorney, Bellevue,
WA

Rev. Dick Gordon, Pastor, Sumner,
WA

Dave Hood, Graphic Designer,
Seattle, WA

Staff & Associates

Terry LeBlanc (Mi'kmaq/Acadian)
National Director

Ray and Elaine Aldred (Cree)

Adrian Jacobs (Cayuga)

Rick and Linda Martin (Cree)

Tim Stime (Norwegian)

Celine Genest (Huron/French)

Dale Hunter (Métis)

Gina Merritt (Croatian-American)

Wes & Summer Graham (Euro-
American)

Un-reached People

As I read further in the issue of Mission Frontiers in front of me, I could hardly believe what I was reading! According to some mission experts, the vast majority of Native North American tribes were considered to be unreached people! How was this possible given the number of years of mission, the number of churches on our reserves and reservations and the number of Native people who appear to align themselves with Christianity on census surveys—even some of the global mission surveys?

Well, truth be told, it is not only true, it seems to have become more so in the past decades—even as mission elsewhere in the world was growing and expanding—as other groups of people were becoming “reached”—Native North Americans were losing ground, many sliding into nominal Christian religion.

The Joshua Project (www.joshuaproject.net) indicates that, in general, just around 3-5% of Native peoples have an active, committed relationship with Christ—though considerably more “align” themselves with a Christian tradition for administering rites of passage in such things as weddings and funerals.

What has become clear through this is that our cultures—whatever they may be—are important in evangelism, faith and discipleship. This is true whether we are Native North American, Filipino, Chinese (choose the sub-culture here!), Croatian American or just “plain” European. In the case of Native North America, this is the variable that has almost always been neglected in the proclamation of the gospel.

When we established My People International, our intent was to change what needed changing in past mission strategies in order to more effectively reach our people for Christ. We believed then and still believe that the way we treat culture, in evangelism

through discipleship, is crucial. Our four-part mission made this clear: communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ to Native North American people in a culturally relevant way; discipling them in a culturally affirming way; encouraging Christ-centred worship in a culturally redemptive way; and promoting a Native North American presence in the wider church, in a culturally appropriate way.

In this issue we follow-up on events reported on last time where we sought to do just that. Each shows that Native people are responding differently! It makes a difference when gospel proclamation and discipleship is rooted in the language and culture of the hearer.

This changed approach to mission will make it no longer necessary to consider Native people as unreached, just and only the mission field. We think that as Native people we should be both the hearers and doers of the good news. Together we can make that true, God’s grace providing. Thanks for helping!

-Terry LeBlanc

Following up on the Caledonia Context

Last issue we made note of the situation in Caledonia, just outside Brantford, Ontario. Members of the Six Nations Iroquois reserve were in dispute over a portion of land, originally theirs by treaty, which was be-

ing developed for housing while still under legal claim. While the disagreement continues, the hostilities and blockade have ceased. The developer has been “reimbursed” for their expendi-

tures and the issues now lie with governments. There are still bitter people living on lands bordering the reserve and relationships are strained.

(cont'd inside)

Caledonia, cont'd

Adrian—our staff worker—still visits regularly with pastors and Christian leaders from the Native and non-Native community to bring healing, reconciliation and restoration.

In the last issue of *Indigenews* we made mention of this as Adrian's context—a place where he ministers; a member of this reserve; a concern for his community and the wider community of faith. We had a few people ask why we were being "political" in reporting this, especially printing the open letter to government from the Aboriginal Council of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

Our response is simply this: context matters—whether here in North America or in China, Tibet or Africa. Christian faith must exist in context—transforming it to be sure. One of the reasons Christianity has not made inroads in many Native communities is that context has either been minimized or ignored altogether. We wanted to make you aware that the context in which we minister, while complex, is important. Though we walk in the wider Christian community, we must do so with integrity—to our calling and to our people. Hope this helps make it more clear. Thanks for being with us in all this.

- Terry LeBlanc



Staff Profile: Tim ... and Wong Yin Mooi Stime!

It was a very warm July 1st as we gathered under a tent in our spacious yard West of Edmonton to celebrate together the marriage of Tim Stime and Wong Yin Mooi. Tim is a My People staff member living just North of Edmonton, AB and Yin Mooi, his new bride, came from Malaysia. Guests from Canada, the US and Malaysia came together to enjoy the out-of-doors, the fine food, the fellowship and to bless and encourage the union. It was only Yin Mooi's second trip to Canada—and what a trip it was! Tim and Yin Mooi's first meeting was via what has become one of the most common meeting places of our day—the Christian internet. Yin Mooi and Tim's relationship blossomed and, this past winter, it moved to the obvious next step—marriage. Though a formal commitment to pursue marriage had been made then, it was not until Tim's second visit to Malaysia, in May, that a formal engagement ceremony took place hosted by Yin Mooi's family and friends and the wedding was formally on-track. We are excited for them both and look forward to many opportunities to learn with them as we serve Christ together.

Five of Tim's six children were able to attend their dad's wedding, presenting him with special gifts, the girls of music and song, the boys of the unusual though touching gift of a live Bison to provide meat for the newlywed couple. The whole of the day was, to say the least, very special and memorable.

Tim completed his degree in Theology and worked in ministry with Lutheran Bible transiators, then Wyciiŕŕe Bibie Transiators, completing his work in translation with Action International. Tim worked under mission contract with World Vision Canada, developing the first ever Native Christian Networking Directory which has now been merged with another similar US-based project for more complete coverage. Tim completed his work with World Vision as the facilitator of the Native Healing Centre in Edmonton, Alberta.

Tim has been with My People International from its inception nearly six years ago now. Early on, his main work was assisting Mohawk communities in eastern Canada to translate the scriptures. As the project got underway, Tim was able to work together with the local people on several other efforts designed to improve community language scripture use. Presently, Tim coordinates special projects of the ministry and assists our US partner in their volunteer ministry coordination.

Yin Mooi served, until her marriage to Tim, as an executive assistant in a business corporation in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. She has been trained as an administrative secretary and has extensive experience with computers. She looks forward to the opportunity to serve with Tim in a widening area of administrative responsibility with My People.



The Newlyweds!!

- Terry LeBlanc

Introduce us to someone!

This fall, My People is hosting dessert evenings in different parts of Canada and the US (see the dates and locations on p. 4). They are designed to allow those of you whom we know to introduce us to people you know and we don't. It's an opportunity to meet new people, inform them about the ministry of My People International and solicit their support. Over the next last few years we have begun to generate an ever-increasing amount of our own support for the ministry as our major sponsor's funding draws to a close. In the next 10 months we must become fully financially independent. The Lutheran Association has provided several years of support allowing us to grow and develop as an indigenous-led mission to our own people. But, the grant is coming to an end and it's time for us to pick up the slack. We thought the best base of support is individuals who have developed a connection to us over time. Hence the reason for the dessert evenings.

Here's the way they work:

We ask people we know to sponsor a table at one of the events—the cost is \$125; they then invite people they know and we don't to attend the event as their guests—each table seats 8; we present a program outlining the ministry, enjoy some great desserts, and conversation, provide some cultural entertainment (Native dancers this year!) and ask your guests to consider supporting our work. It's that straight-forward.

Here's how you can help:

First, look over the list on page 4 to see where we are hosting events; consider whether you might be able to sponsor a table—either close to home or, in another location (\$125); then, think about people—family and friends—you know in those cities and regions that you might contact about attending;

Some Ministry Highlights

Little Earth —MPI

Just a few short weeks ago, our 6th Dancing the Way tour made one of its stops at Little Earth—an “urban reservation” in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Our last regular letter made note of the event and highlighted a story of its immediate impact.

We thought you might be interested in a couple of updates by way of a “sound byte” taken from note sent by one of the organizers of our time in Little Earth and a conversation with a friend of the ministry in Madison.

⇒ Jim writes, “We are thankful for the grace that was upon you and your DTW team. We are praying that next year there will be enough time and great grace upon you ... to lead to new lives in Jesus and that God will prepare the way during the year.” “You made a big difference.”

Already plans are underway for the next opportunity. We believe we

now have grace to speak boldly into the lives of the people of Little Earth.

Further south, the people of the Madison House of Prayer furthered the work of our visit, continuing to reach out to the people of the Ho Chunk Nation through a few crucial contacts made while we were there. Pray for Alicia, Eric and Dave as they listen to the Spirit together so that the (cont'd) Ho Chunk people might be deeply impacted by Christ.

While presenting at the Karitos Christian festival, we responded to many questions about culture and faith. The outcome was best expressed in the note from the Karitos staff which read, in part:

⇒ “We pray for God's blessing on you as you continue to do the amazing things He has for you.”

... Other Ministry highlights

Ray Aldred taught at the Vancouver School of Theology in early July. A highlight for him was the totem pole raising.

Linda spoke to a group of young mothers from the Long Dog reserve on issues related to pain and abuse. It was a powerful time for the mothers as well as for the cross-denominational organizers. They invited Linda to speak to the youth the following week, and want the Martins to return in the future.

Linda and Rick spoke at the North American Native Ministries conference of the Mennonite Church held recently in Alabama. They were enthusiastically received!

Prayer Works!

We asked for prayer in our last newsletter for Dancing the Way team member, Darin Cadman's boy Darin Jr. I am pleased to report that he has been properly diagnosed, a treatment procedure determined and treatment begun!! His gastrointestinal problem is on-the-mend!

Prayer Needs

... for Ray Aldred's ongoing PhD work—Terry's as well.

... for the Aldreds' daughter, Catherine, as she goes off to Bible college.

... for Terry and Ray as they collaborate with the Episcopal Diocese of Alaska in developing clergy-training curriculum.

... for My People's youth camp ministering to urban Native kids August 14-18.

... for Matt LeBlanc as he navigates a difficult time in his life. Pray for safety and guidance—for an openness to the leading of God's Spirit.

... for other Christian counselors in the area—pressure from the Canadian government appears to be pushing Christian counselors out of their jobs, often, very much against the wishes of the Native people and leaders.



“Discipleship—starting at the Roots!”

My People International

P.O. Box 295
Evansburg, AB T0E 0T0
Canada

Phone 780-727-4522
Fax 780-727-4523
e-mail mpi@aol.com

**Don't forget to check out our
website—
www.mypeopleinternational.com**

Some Upcoming Events

Dessert Evenings with staff

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Sept 28—Spokane, WA— | Sept 29—Seattle, WA— |
| Sept 30—Vancouver, BC— | |
| Oct 5—Madison, WI— | Oct 6—LaPorte, IN— |
| Oct 7—Racine, WI— | Oct 8—Crystal lake, IL— |
| Oct 12—Winnipeg, MB— | Oct 13—Steinbach, MB— |
| Oct 14—Brandon, MB— | Oct 19—Kitchener, ON— |
| Oct 21—Brantford, ON— | Oct 26—Minneapolis, MN— |
| Oct 27—Hampton, IA— | |
| Nov 2—Grande Prairie, AB— | Nov 3—Edmonton, AB— |
| Nov 4—Calgary, AB— | Nov 9—Ottawa, ON— |
| Nov 10—Morrisburg, ON— | |

Other Activities

- Aug 12—My People International Board meeting
Aug 21, 22—Terry Speaks at the Salvation Army Officer's Conference
Sept 18, 19—ARC planning conference—Ray & Elaine Aldred, Rick and Linda Martin and volunteers

