



Indigenews

My People International

Summer 2005
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New Trails in Ministry

by Terry LeBlanc

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“When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God... you are to move out from your positions and follow it. Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before.” Joshua 3:3-4

These were the words of Joshua to the Israelites as they followed the Ark of the Covenant over Jordan. Sound advice—if you haven't been somewhere before, you want to follow close behind the One who has.

My People, too, has been going to new places. Not geographically, but in ways of doing ministry. For First Nations, bringing the gospel message in ways that can be heard requires adaptability and flexibility.

How can we bring people—who might otherwise not have the opportunity—the Good News in ways that connect? What new means do we have to disciple them?

One new way God has shown us involves strengthening marriages. My People's staff adapted Marriage Encounter for use in a First Nations context. In the process, we are making history because

- Almost all the leadership have been people of Aboriginal heritage
- Most of the 150 volunteers for each event are First Nations people
- While ministering to 25 couples, each session

Marriage in Native North America

According to census data, better than 65% of Aboriginal people in Canada are under the age of 24.

Common law or casual relationships

are widespread among these young people. What's more, healthy marriage is fading fast—more than 41% of Aboriginal peo-

ple in “traditional families identify domestic violence as one of the top six crises in their community.



Terry LeBlanc teaches a recent workshop attended by Native men and women from around North America

the program trains other couples to do the actual ministry.

The trainees are developing leadership skills and taking growing responsibility for the program. So, in the future, the ministry and discipleship will be self-sustaining with only facilitation provided by our staff.

Equipping local teams to lead boosts the confidence of First Nations people and counteracts negative stereotypes. Also, hosting people from both urban and remote communities enhances a needed linkage—urban and reserve. One person from a remote reserve remarked, “This is exactly what our people need. How do we get this to our people back home?”

Imagine the impact for God's kingdom as the Spirit continues to do his work! We'll have to follow God carefully—we're not always sure of the next steps, but we have confidence in the One who leads.

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Did You Know? The Story Behind the My People Logo

The text is simply “My People” in different Languages. The “My” is from the Creator’s perspective—we are all his people. While not every Native North American language is included, this short list represents a range of linguistic types and includes the three most common European languages spoken by many Native North Americans. This reflects our commitment to being intercultural in our approaches to mission.

The hoop and the prayer shield

(also called a mandala) represent the circle of life—a life lived prayerfully and with respect, under the guidance of our Creator. The green wampum carries a representation of the “tree of life.” The cross reminds us of the sacrifice made and the price paid by the chosen one, Jesus. The two are interconnected—the tree of life, for the one who believes, is the cross on which this chosen one sealed the covenant of life over death with our Creator. Through his person, work, life,

teaching, death and resurrection, relationship is renewed for all people everywhere. The four colored beads represent this universality.

The two feathers represent cultural encounter, which is at the heart of ministry in a good way. Ministry is reciprocal. Each person in the encounter has both something to offer another and something they need from the other. All creation—including people of differing cultures and



The My People international logo.

Logo Cont'd
worldviews—has something to teach the one willing to be taught (Romans 1).

Introducing My People International’s Staff

In future issues, we will spotlight a staff member, volunteer, or associate in more detail. For now, here’s a brief introduction to our staff:

Ray and Elaine Aldred—The Aldreds direct My People’s Marriage Encounter program, lead abuse seminars, and perform marriage counseling and discipleship. Ray writes, develops study and educational materials, and speaks on Native theology and mission in the U.S. and Canada. Ray is working on his PhD in Theology.

Adrian Jacobs—Adrian mentors and trains pastors in Iroquoian communities in the U.S. and Canada, develops mentoring materials, and writes articles on Native perspectives and missiology. He is serving as a consultant on the Mohawk Bible Translation Project. Adrian is working on an MA in Mission.

Rick and Linda Martin—The Martins offer counseling, lead counseling training programs, lead abuse survivor and anger/stress management workshops, provide pastoral care for Native pastors, and direct a hockey ministry. Much of their work is in remote, fly-in communities. Each holds an M.A. in Biblical Counseling.

Tim Stime—Tim is My People’s volunteer and special projects coordinator. Special projects include church repairs, elder services, youth camps—whatever is needed. He also monitors the Mohawk Bible Translation Project. Tim has worked with Wycliffe and Lutheran Bible Translators and has a B.A. in Theology.

Celine Genest—Celine oversees the Mohawk Bible translation project on-site, working with consultant Adrian Jacobs and volunteer translators Mavis Etienne and Harvey Gabriel.

Dale Hunter—Dale provides computer support and training for the staff.

Terry LeBlanc—Terry serves as ministry director, working in Canada and the U.S. Besides supervising the staff, he works with Native leadership and non-Natives working in Native ministry. He writes articles and commentaries (*Faith in Action Study Bible*, Zondervan), and directs *Dancing the Way*. Terry speaks at conferences, colleges, and churches, sharing a new vision for Native ministry and creating bridges for reconciliation. He is working on his PhD in Intercultural Studies.

“This is exactly what our people need. How do we get this to our people back home?”



Staff stroll the beach at Neah Bay, WA during a staff retreat.

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Ministry Highlights— March through June 2005

- Ray and Elaine led a Marriage Encounter weekend and eight-week follow-up in Winnipeg, and at least one person came to faith as a result. The Aldreds also finished their training in the SALTS (Survivors of Abuse Leadership Training Seminar).
- Rick and Linda presented workshops in Northwest Ontario on anger and stress management. The people were greatly impacted, and the Martins have been invited to four other communities.
- Terry taught on the Hopi reservation about contextual ministry and theology in April. He was also the keynote speaker at a Baptist Missions Conference, addressing the need for intercultural teams in Native mission. In June he met with bishops from three denominations to discuss Native-focused ministry training and a new curriculum.
- In June, Dancing the Way ministered in Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, and Ontario. The team received standing ovations at one large church. On the Rez, team members began building relationships with traditional Midewin people.
- The Mohawk translation of Second Corinthians is now in its second printing. Daniel will be out shortly, and other books are in various stages of completion.**
- Year 5 of My People's VBS curriculum is in print! This completes a five year series which began with a collective vision for Native designed, written and developed material for kids.

Prayer Needs

- Please pray for the people whose lives have been touched through this ministry, that they might grow strong as they walk the Jesus Road.
- Please pray for the Native communities where My People ministers, that they might find wholeness in Jesus.
- Please pray for the Aldreds as they move from Regina, SK, to Winnipeg, MB. Please pray for the sale of their house.
- Please pray for Ray's yearly review of his PhD dissertation on September 13.
- Please pray for the Lord's blessing and anointing upon My People International's upcoming events.
- ⇒ Fall Dessert Evenings
- ⇒ Increased Canadian funding
- ⇒ This fall's conferences, teaching sessions and outreach events

Ways to Stay Connected

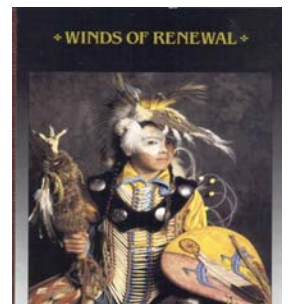
- If your church or school is having a missions/ministry conference that you would like My People to participate in, please call or write.
- From Sept. 30—Nov. 19, My People will host fifteen Dessert Evenings. Come and hear Terry, Ray, and other My People staff share how God is bringing new hope to Native people. Featured artist will be Cree musician Lawrence Fehler from Northern Alberta. If your church would like to have a Dessert Evening in the future—great— just let us know!
- What can My People International do to serve you and your church? Let's talk about it! Don't hesitate to get in touch.
- If you would like to participate in future ministry projects—whether service projects, youth camps, VBS, or Dancing the Way, please call or write.



Dancing The Way completed its fifth summer tour of ministry to reservations and churches June 12-22.

** MPI partnered with the Mohawk community to launch the program—our Associate, Celine Genest now coordinates this work.

Please keep the staff in your prayers. Maybe you can hang this newsletter on the refrigerator as a reminder!



Renewal is underway! Get involved—call or write us today!



“Discipleship at the Roots!”

My People International

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**Watch for our new website—
www.mypeopleinternational.com
coming soon!!!**



Ray Aldred and wife Elaine joined the MPI staff last year to give leadership to programs designed to disciple families by strengthening marriages and families.

Some Upcoming Events

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| August, 2005 | Sports and culture camps, Northwest Ontario and Saskatchewan |
| August 7-14 | Terry speaking at the World Christian Gathering on Indigenous People in Sweden. |
| Mid-August | Ray and Terry in Whitehorse for the first training session of a new approach to Native ministry preparation. This program is in partnership with the North American Institute of Indigenous Theological Studies, Asbury Seminary, and other partners. |
| August (on-going) | Rick and Linda meet with the Nishnawbe Aski Nation leadership concerning the crisis in youth suicides in their tribal area in northwestern Ontario. |
| Sept. 23-24 | Ray and Terry meeting with the Aboriginal Council of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. |
| Sept. 30-Nov. 19 | Dessert Evenings in Vancouver, BC; Abbotsford, BC; Seattle, WA; Saskatoon, SK; Regina, SK; Kitchener, ON; Mississauga, ON; Grande Prairie, AB; Winnipeg, MB; Brandon, MB; Steinbach, MB; Calgary, AB; Edmonton, AB; Ottawa, ON; Iroquois, ON. Call for details! |
| Nov. 9-11 | Ray Aldred speaking at York University, Toronto; Waterloo University and Western University, London, ON. Sponsored by Intervarsity Christian Fellowship. |
| Nov. 18 | Ray speaking at the Church Planting Congress of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. |