



My People
 Nitiyiniimak
 Mon peuple
 k'aa'yitsuxadiidis
 Oyate Mitawa
 Ntmimajuinung
 Akonkwetashón:'a
 Δεφνιβ
 Mi Pueblo

Indigenews

My People International

Winter 2007
 Volume II, Issue 3

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Partnership in the Good News

Partnerships make life manageable. On a personal level, they allow life to be lived in a more sane way. Without them, we would feel alone whenever a challenge to life arose. And from the standpoint of mission, they make kingdom work more effective.

Since MPI's founding, partnerships have made us more effective for the kingdom. Take the partnership with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF), one of the premier ministries to college and university students around the world. For nearly seven years, our staff has worked with InterVarsity to make a bigger impact among Native North American students. At IVCF's Urbana conference, Native student attendance increased from under 100 in 2000 to almost 500 in 2003! A huge increase!

This partnership has addressed a large concern for us —how to follow through with the Native college student population. And it has allowed IVCF to meet their objective of ministering to each student they meet in a meaningful and culturally relevant way.

That's why we've been so gratified to be recognized by IVCF for our commitment to and partnership with them in training their people for ministry with Native North American students. In a recently published brochure, their Ethnic Ministries Director wrote,

"InterVarsity is carefully laying foundations for campus ministry attuned to Aboriginal/First Nations students, beginning by learning aboriginal

history, social context and language. It is our priority to be mentored by aboriginal Christian leaders associated with My People International..."

Neither of us could accomplish our goals nor be as effective in our specific areas of calling without the other fulfilling their unique role. That's the value of partnership in the Good News.

Such a powerful affirmation of our work has made us very aware of the need to continue to put energy and time into the partnerships we have. Others include Rising Above, Wiconi International, Lutheran Association and the North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies.

Partnerships help us make more happen with less, making us more effective and efficient with our resources. They allow us to capitalize on our strengths yet not ignore our weaknesses. If we are to get the job done, partnerships are virtually indispensable.

Hebrews 3:1 calls us all "holy partners in a heavenly calling." It's great to know we're engaged in a work of such tremendous importance undergirded by so many powerful partnerships. And that certainly includes each of you reading this newsletter!
 - Terry LeBlanc



Caledonia Anniversary

February 28 marks the one year anniversary for the Six Nations land reclamation just outside of Caledonia, Ontario. Supporters

and friends are invited for a day long visit with food and fellowship with Six Nations and other people at the reclamation site.

Please pray for the following:

- A just resolution - the solution must courageously do *what is right*;
- A fair resolution - the solution needs to be compassionate and fair to all involved; (*cont'd on p. 4*)

Did you Know?

It was probably the first time I've gotten that kind of reaction to anything I've said – blank stares, dumbfounded expressions. The topic wasn't profound. I wasn't using twenty-five dollar words. But I was communicating in a language known only to me. And that made my point. What point? That the Good News must be communicated in a clear and fully comprehensible way to the listener or the message may be lost.

The audience was attending a workshop on culture and faith I was delivering some years back. I could tell at the outset some of the participants were doubtful that culture had as much to do with faith as I was suggesting. Wasn't the scripture clearly understandable to any led of the Spirit? Wasn't its message universal? Yes, but maybe not the way they thought.

Remember that time in the book of Acts where the message was spoken in languages unknown to the speaker but crystal clear to the listener? Language, according to most cultural anthropologists, is the root of culture.

That got me thinking. So I started to share the Good News in the Mi'kmaq language – at least, to the best of my ability. That's when I saw the blank stares. As the buzz in the audience grew, I knew I had made my point—or at least started to. You see, there is more to culture than simply language. And there is a whole lot more to a rich relationship with Jesus than one type of music, form of meeting, or way of prayer. (con't. on Page 3)

Associate Staff Profile: Gina Merritt

Gina Merritt has become a great friend and ally—to me personally, to the ministry of My People International—and with many in the wider Native community. Gina is of Irish and Croatian ancestry living in Ingleside, IL with her husband Rob who is descended from the Pueblo Nation of the Southwest US. They have two children—John who lives at home and is finishing high-school and Melissa who lives in Chicago where she is studying for her undergraduate degree.

Gina is in her final year of a Masters Degree in non-profit management at North Park University in Chicago. She uses her natural talents and what she learns there to make life for My People a far more interesting and efficient organization.

Gina's role with us has expanded from its original focus, booking and facilitating our dance team ministry, Dancing the Way, to having full charge of the development and oversight of our donors and administration. Together with husband Rob, Gina has developed a very involved and detailed database to allow us to serve our donors more effectively and communicate our ministry more thoroughly.

Gina's passion? In her own words:

“The one thing about MPI, that I'd like to tell the whole world, or at least the whole evangelical world, is why I'm committed to the ministry of My People. And that has to do with spending decades as a committed Christian who studied her Bible conscientiously, attended church faithfully, and yet ended up having blended so much American culture into my Christianity that it made me ineffective as a witness for Christ. God used one thing you (Terry) told me—about the talking tree—to wake me up. It was a long, traumatic process to have my “Christian” assumptions dismantled. But this change testifies to the fact that the rest of the body of Christ needs what God has given First Nations believers. Yes, I care a lot about the needs of the Native community. But the rest of the non-Native church really needs them (kind of fits with the idea of partnership, huh?).”

Gina aims to complete her degree by the spring of 2007 and then work with My People as a full-time paid staff person directing our development as an organization of ministry.



(con't from Page 2)

When we thought through our mission in light of this, we determined there were four things we wanted to do above all. They form our four-part mission statement.

First, we want to communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ to Native North American people in a culturally relevant way. Second, we are committed to disciple Native people so that we affirm their cultural identity. Third, we desire to promote Native North American worship of and relationship with Jesus in a culturally redemptive way. And finally, we want to facilitate a culturally appropriate Native North American presence in the wider, cross-denominational church.

We believe this is the best way to realize our vision—that every Native North American Person will know a fulfilled Faith and Life through Jesus Christ – experienced in a Native North American Way!

Over the next four issues of *Indigenews*, we want to share our thinking about these things with you so that you can understand our approach to ministry better – and so you might be better able to pray we accomplish what we have set out to do.

Several of the staff will be writing on their ideas and understandings of these elements of our mission and their impact.

- Terry LeBlanc & Gina Merritt



Terry, Giullietta Brown from Australia, and Vincent Yellow old Woman at the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, DC.

Some Ministry and Staff Highlights

Urbana '06

Terry and Ray taught at Inter-iversity Christian Fellowship's Urbana '06 missions conference in December. My People's dance team ministry, Dancing the Way, presented at a general session for an audience of nearly 25,000 people.

It Works!

Ray received a wonderful letter showing how MPI is impacting indigenous people all over.

A message Ray gave three years ago on cross-cultural identity brought the writer to the realization that he had always struggled with an ethnic identity crisis.

Growing up, he hated the way he was created and the fact that he was Chinese. He writes "the talk you gave that night sparked me

onto a journey that I am forever thankful for." He adds "Thank you for affecting my life with what God has blessed you with uniquely in your people group."

MPI goes to Washington!

(Jan 31) Terry was invited to the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, DC, along with friends Vincent Yellow Old Woman, Richard Twiss, and Terry Starr. They prayed, spoke, and sang, and received a standing ovation as they walked off the stage! They also had a private meeting with the Secretary of the Interior regarding issues of land, sovereignty and the need to pray for and with Native leaders.

"You will testify before kings and governors because of my name, so that you can testify" Luke 21:12.

Relief from Pain

During the last couple months, Rick and Linda have taught on sexual abuse at different workshops. After the teaching, there were people who felt safe in sharing their trauma one-on-one with the Martins. For some people this was the first time in 50 or 60 years they had talked about the pain they carried.

Prayer Needs

Pray for the upcoming Enenehmoon Circle March 17-24, for the staff as they prepare, and for God to draw the people there he wants. Seminar to train people in small group ministry for abuse issues.

Pray for our summer culture camp for disadvantaged Native kids from the inner-city scheduled for July 21-27 to be held at Wind Raven Ranch, a facility run by a Mohawk friend of the ministry. It will serve 24 kids.

Pray for Terry as he takes qualifying exams for his doctorate March 6 – 13.

Pray for Terry as he travels to New Zealand for a training conference with the Maori on community development in late March and early April

Pray for Ray and Elaine Aldred as they relocate to Calgary, AB, particularly for their house hunting.

Pray for Rick and Linda Martin for safe travel and

God's guidance in their speaking. For health and strength, as they have been under the weather recently.

Early this month, two young men, brothers, died in a fire—**pray for** their family as they grieve. The family is from Cat Lake, ON, where Rich and Linda minister.

Pray for safe travel for 14 people traveling from Grindstone Valley Bible Church in Waterdown, ON, to help with the children's program in Muskrat Dam. The program will include hockey and short lessons of Biblical principles.

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

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*Check out some of the new
stories and links on our
website!*

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Cont'd from page 1)

- The Six Nations Hereditary Chiefs - who are leading the negotiations
- The Six Nations Community - many differing groups in the community need to come together
- For the Body of Christ at Six Nations and up and down the Grand River that we be part of a solution that speaks the truth in love.
- The Government of Canada - that it takes responsibility for its handling of Six Nations Lands and money and negotiate a just and fair settlement in good faith.

Since our first mention of the Caledonia situation, in a previous newsletter, much has happened. We'll update you in the next few issues.

- Adrian Jacobs

Dates and Events ...

February 23 Terry speaking at Macalester University in Minnesota on the subject of Native people and Christian faith

Feb 23 – Adrian speaking at Emmanuel Bible College, Kitchener, ON

March 2-4 – Muskrat Dam, program for kids grade 1 through high school

March 11 – Native Ministry Training Service, Alymer Evangelical Missionary Church, Alymer, ON

March – 17-24, Ee-neh-neh-moon Circle, north of Winnipeg, MB serving Native people from the US and Canada who are dealing with abuse or the abused

March 18—Indigenous Worship gathering—Edmonton

March 28 – April 1 - Rick and Linda speaking in Waskaganish, QB, a fly in Cree community, 1000 miles north of Toronto

April—Dessert and Information Evenings in Hampton, IA, and Long Grove, IL

April 16 – 21 Ray teaching at Tribal Winds YWAM Discipleship Training School near Flagstaff, AZ

April 16 – 21 Terry teaching on Principles of a reconciled Life on the Lac Courtes Oreilles reservation in Wisconsin

April 26 – 28 Rick and Linda teaching at Dealing with Pain of the Past: a Journey of Hope conference about unresolved pain, grief, and abuse issues; Omaha, Nebraska

April 27 – 30 Ray speaking at the Grande Prairie Alliance Church, Grande Prairie, AB

May 2-3 Terry has been invited to speak at the Canadian Parliamentary prayer breakfast in Ottawa, ON and will be assembling a delegation of other Native leaders to attend at the invitation of the Parliament

May 1/4 – Ray, Terry and Adrian at the Aboriginal Ministries Council Meeting, Ottawa, ON

May 24 – 26 Rick and Linda teaching at a Counseling the Sexually Abused Conference, Sioux Lookout, ON

May 30 – June 3 Rick and Linda teaching at Rising Above National Conference on Sexual Abuse, Walpole Island, ON (near Detroit, MI)