



Indigenews

My People International

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American)

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Continuing our explanation of the four points of our mission statement, Ray Aldred speaks about...

Worship in a Culturally Appropriate Way

Speaking of his ministry to the Gentiles, Paul says of its focus, "until Christ is formed in you." He knew it was necessary that Gentiles not be forced to worship in a Jewish way, full of Jewish ceremonies, but that they, like the Jews, worship in a culturally appropriate way. This is the genius of the Gospel – it is possible to be expressed in any people group. No one culture or worldview has the corner on the market of how worship should be expressed.

We saw this demonstrated at a recent training conference. At the end we all joined in a round dance to celebrate the completion of the course and the wholeness Jesus has given us as his children. We joined hands and moved to the drum as Michael Jacob's song played over the loudspeaker, "Welcome home, my loved ones, welcome home..." Worshiping in a culturally appropriate way is about bringing the Gospel home.

This is what Jesus explained to the woman at the well in John Chapter 4. She said, "The Jews say you must worship God in Jerusalem, but we say we must worship here." Jesus responded that the true worshippers of God must worship Him in spirit and in truth. He drew out the truth of her

many failed relationships, yet still offered her an opportunity to find true worship. It was tied up in her putting her faith in him as the Messiah. Jesus understood everything about her, but he loved her anyway. As a result, she worshipped Him, acknowledged His worth, and began to tell others about Jesus the Messiah, their savior. True worship must be expressed out of the honesty of our own being, who we really are, and focused toward who Jesus really is, the savior.

My People International is committed to being an organization calling out aboriginal people to be who they are (Really, who else can you be?) and to worship Jesus as they are. Many aboriginal people grow up hating who they are. Like the woman at the well, they believe they have nothing to offer. Our message is that Jesus knows everything about you and He loves you and even likes you. Of course, Jesus loves us too much to leave us just the way we are – he wants to grow us and shape us into who he created us to be. Worship in a culturally appropriate way is about creating space for people to grow up into who they were meant to be, human beings in a trust relationship with God the Father, through Jesus Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

- Ray Aldred



A Change in the Wind....

This year, My People embarks on an historic journey of unparalleled proportions for such a small ministry organization - building the capacity of Native people for ministry and mission. Seven training events in just over a year!

The training will address such topics as: Cross-cultural Partnerships,

Contextualization: Issues and Practice, Biblical Interpretation through Native Eyes, Preaching a Faithful Gospel, Church Planting Strategies, Suicide Prevention and Intervention, Peer Counselling: An Introduction, Sexual Abuse Issues, Culture in Faith: Communication through cultural mediums – and others.

"Why build capacity when people just need to hear the simple truth of the gospel?" you might ask. A good question!

For many generations Native North Americans have believed Christian faith required them to become like Euro North Americans. Many still do!

(cont'd on p. 2)

Change in the Wind... *(cont'd from front)*

In best-case scenarios Native peoples have struggled to embrace God through Western cultural ways and understandings – ways which, to them, are increasingly separating ‘secular’ from the sacred. In worst cases, they have rejected Christ outright because of requirements which, in their view, would strip them of their cultural identity. Add to that grinding poverty, socially dysfunctional communities, high suicide rates, family breakdown and marital collapse and it has been difficult to see the Good News for what it is – the beginning of new life. Many simply see it as the continuation of the old repression their ancestors experienced. As a consequence, the “rollercoaster” experience of Christian faith is an experience that is deeply rooted in the Native North American community.

Building capacity in Native people will help change this trend. It will enable Native people to “own” their faith in Christ in culturally meaningful ways – which they are in control of, not someone else. Faith in Jesus will therefore, be able to adapt and flourish in the changing worlds of Native peoples. The need for outside mission will change to that of needing people for partnership, not control.

Stated simply, without the capacity to grow, adapt and make life with Jesus our own, the same issues we confront today – abuse, addiction, violence, suicide, transient faith, family instability – will linger as challenges for tomorrow. That’s why it’s important to build people’s ability to own and transmit faith in Jesus in ways which make sense and, which make authentic disciples.

While we expect that Native people in ministry will want to attend these events, this training is for all people – Native or not – who want to do ministry “in a good way” among Native people. The presentations, primarily from Native men and women, focus on skills, not just theory. They stem from many years of ministry experience and even more years of personal and collective discipleship.

This project is designed to train Native men and women to be more effective in personal, family and community life – and therefore more effective as ministers of the Good News among our own. . It is also about helping our non-Native partners and those interested in Native ministry acquire the skills they need to make a difference and bring Jesus to people in a good way—then, others may be won to Him to lead healthy lives also. So, if you are presently involved in or are considering involvement in Native ministry, we at My People International invite you to make this a priority on your calendar!

(see back page for dates and locations)

- Terry LeBlanc

Staff Profile: Wes & Summer Graham

Wes and Summer Graham grew up in Ohio, she on a dairy farm and he in the small city of Canton. He had dreams of being a cowboy, she had dreams of reaching out to kids, and both had a call to cross-cultural ministry. It is awesome to see how God blended all this together and is using them to minister the love of Jesus on the Blackfeet Reservation.

The Grahams relocated to Browning, Montana in March 2006 and have been blessed by the people and land ever since. Wes currently works for North Fork Cattle Company, a 28,000 acre ranch on the reservation. He thoroughly enjoys his work as a cowboy and his primary role as an ambassador for Christ among his coworkers. Summer teaches an alternative class at Browning Middle School and marvels at how God has orchestrated so many great inroads to build relationships and discover community values.

Summer says, “Wes and I have a strong passion for discipleship and to grow along with others in His word that we may together become mature followers of Christ.” They decided to get jobs in the community to build foundations of trust with the people and to share God’s love through the relationships. “In a place where historically missionaries unfortunately all too often separated the message from relationships of respect and love, we are trying to demonstrate that the Creator’s message is so much more than words. We stand in awe at the opportunities God has provided beyond what we could have asked or imagined!”

This summer, one of those opportunities was leading groups of at-risk Blackfeet youth on wilderness camping trips into the Montana mountains. Summer also helped with MPI’s Kid’s Camp in Evansburg, AB in August, facilitating, teaching and helping with sports activities. “What a blessing it was to love on these kids and teach them about their unique place and purpose in their Creator’s heart and mind.” She looks forward to being a part of expanding both these programs next year.

Wes and Summer are continually seeking how the Lord would have them serve Him on the Blackfeet Reservation. We look forward to seeing what the Lord will do – please keep the Grahams in your prayers!

- Gina Merritt



Hope renewed...

The Martins recently presented at workshops in Thunder Bay and Montreal on recovering from sexual abuse. They would especially like to thank supporters from Elmira, ON, who specifically prayed for these conferences. Here are some of the responses of participants:

"I've gone through this – I'm glad I came."

In speaking about shame, one man said, "now I understand and I realize the damage and how to change."

"I know now that I'm not alone."

"When we talked about internal damage, it helped me realize what's really going on with me."

One lady shared her insight that "It is not the things that have been done to us that destroy us but how we respond to it."

In Montreal, a young woman shared that through the conference she had come to faith in Christ.

A participant from Thunder Bay said "I'm glad I came – this gives me strength to be a better counsellor to others."

Ministry/Staff Highlights

- Gina Merritt

Mohawk Translation—Montreal

The Mohawk Bible translation team is putting out the book (and CD) of Proverbs in the language for Christmas. Anyone wanting copies can email Mavis Etienne, chairperson, at mavis.e@sympatico.ca, or Celine Bastien, facilitator, at hec-tor.celine.genest@sympatico.ca.

Kids Kamp—Alberta

There is exciting dialogue going on right now between MPI and InterVarsity Canada's Pioneer Camp directors in Alberta. There is a desire for collaboration in putting together an Aboriginal Kid's Camp, using InterVarsity's vast experience, expertise and facilities in camping programs and MPI's background and knowledge in First Nations culture, traditions, spirituality. Hopes are high for such a camp for a week in August, 2008.

VBS Revisions—Edmonton

The Year 4 VBS is being revised and proofread for reprint. Tim Stime hopes to have it completed

by January for publication in the spring of 2008.

People's Church—Toronto

Ray and Terry—along with other Native friends they had asked to join in—presented a one-day 'Mission Fest' at People's Church in Toronto. The focus: Native Mission and the work of My People International.

During the Sunday morning services, Ray and Terry spoke—Ray the message and Terry the challenge to get involved. What an astounding response. The congregation gave an offering toward the training events (see this issue) which topped \$54,000!!!

Verdell Goulding, one of the missions pastors said, "We were thrilled with your participation in our September conference and with all the positive feedback we received. We look forward to exploring continued partnership in the future."

CCI Executive Leadership—

Terry spoke to the Executive Leadership of most of Canada's Christian Camps. He asked

them to consider partnerships with Native people and ministries to create more effective approaches to camping for Native kids, youth and families.

The response has been tremendous. Many of the Execs were significantly challenged—in a very positive way!

IVCF Student Leaders_ Canada and the USA

Terry presented four talks at the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship staff and student leaders retreat on worldview and the gospel. It was a wonderful time in the mountains to reflect on what God is doing in the world as the gospel speaks through other worldview perspectives...

Prayer Needs

- ⇒ Vivien Stime has gotten her permanent residency papers, so she is free to travel outside of Canada and will be leaving 11/28 to visit her mother in Malaysia. Please pray for a safe trip!
- ⇒ Please pray for the Aldreds as they continue to adjust after their move to Calgary.
- ⇒ Please continue to pray for Ray's father, who has leukemia.
- ⇒ Ray is blessed to be mentoring Roger Boyer, an Anishinabe doctoral student at Asbury Seminary. Please pray that the Lord gives Ray wisdom.
- ⇒ For Bev and Terry's son Matt who is struggling through life right now...
- ⇒ For Rick to regain his full strength after a bout of pneumonia

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

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

www.
mypeopleinternational.com

What is our Vision?

Our vision is a simple one though broadly stated:

That every Native North American Person will know a fulfilled Faith and Life through Jesus Christ – experienced in a Native North American Way.

What is our mission?

To communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ to Native North American people in a culturally relevant way; affirm Native culture and context in our discipleship; encourage culturally-redemptive Christ-centred worship; and facilitate a culturally appropriate presence of Native people in the wider church.

Dates and Events ...

In Memoriam

Thanks to the following people who gave contributions to MPI ... *in memory of...*

Rev. E. James and Christina Scobbie gave a gift in memory of Marina Froese. (This was inadvertently omitted from the last newsletter—please accept our apologies.)

Jim and Sonja Halvorson gave a gift in memory of Freda Colander (Tim Stime's aunt...).

Upcoming Events

Sunday, Dec. 9	Rick and Linda will be speaking at Sudbury First Nations Church
Dec. 10-14	Rick and Linda will be doing counseling at the church
Sunday, Dec. 16	Rick and Linda will again speak at the Sudbury First Nations Church
Nov. 29 – Dec. 1	North American Institute of Indigenous Theological Studies, South Dakota
December 14	Ray, Terry and Adrian at Aboriginal Ministry Council of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada

2008

January 22	Ray speaking at Messiah College in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
Feb.	Terry and Ray at the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, DC
Apr. 24	MPI Dessert Evening - New Brighton, MN – New Brighton Family Services Center

Training Events—When and Where will these be offered?

February, 2008–	Ee-neh-neh-mun Circle – Camp Arnes, Winnipeg, MB
March 6-8, 2008 –	Truro, NS
May 29 -31, 2008 –	Madison, WI
October 13-17, 2008 –	Ee-neh-neh-mun Circle – Edmonton, AB
November 20-22, 2008 –	Billings, MT
November 27-29, 2008 –	Toronto, ON
March 16-20, 2009 –	Ee-neh-neh-mun Circle – Eastern Canada (location TBA)