



Indigenews

My People International

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SPECIAL!!—see the enclosed iEmergence Newsletter

Creator, Kids and Creation

The Setting: The lush green forested foothills on the east side of the Rocky Mountains Northwest of Calgary, where Intervarsity has its Pioneer Lodge Camp

The Time: August, 2010

The Event: Kids Culture Camp

My People, in our continuing partnership with InterVarsity and Edmonton Native Healing Center, pulled off, in my humble opinion, the best Kids Culture Camp ever. The 60 kids we'd prayed and hoped for showed up along with more Native elders and staff than ever before. We planned that this year we would focus on finding ways to turn conflict issues into positive learning and grace-giving opportunities, so staff orientation focused precisely on that. Creator God answered our request. It worked really well.

For so many kids this is a week that opens a window of joy, provides hope and builds trust in a loving Creator and His Son Jesus to help them through dark times in their lives – so staff orientation focused on creating a sense of belonging, of loving others and being loved in return; being generous in word and deed. The outcome among campers was superb.

Problems became opportunities for growth and good decision-making in the context of a patient and forgiving camp atmosphere. When kids are loved, appreciated and encouraged for 5 days straight it can't help but provide a landmark place to look back on so that when life is rough and love is scarce they'll be able to remind themselves: "I know that God loves me, that I'm loved – the people at camp showed me that!"

Our Cree friend Nora Yellowknee, husband Barrie and sister Millie made three new tipis in the Woods Cree style that we used at the camp this year making a total of eight in the encampment. They also brought along two other smaller tipis for teaching. On that cool August orientation night Viv and I and the other staffers

who had come early to help set up camp, found ourselves cozied-up to a pine wood fire blazing in the rock pit in the centre of one of the tipis, the smoke rising straight up and out the smoke hole. Other than the occasional loud snoring, we enjoyed a great night's sleep and family atmosphere – a good start to the week!



The camp schedule was simple: following the morning prayer/worship time kids were on the land to learn more about God's creation. Then, it was on to traditions of their people: dance, songs of worship to the Creator and the life-lesson teachings and ways of their people – all taught by skilled artisans and elders.

The pool was the focus of the late morning with afternoons spent in horsemanship, craft-time (mastering the variety of skills needed to create their own beaded medallions!) and the high-energy Iroquois game of Lacrosse.

Teaching times and ceremonial activities were God-honoring in a respectful Native way, gathered within the tipi circle or, in the evenings, huddled around the campfire nestled in its centre; most often in the quiet of the tipi in conversations between counselor and the kids. Kids heard the story of Jesus.

Kids came from communities across Alberta including Edmonton, Calgary, Bigstone, Morley, Enoch, Boyle and a handful from Blackfeet communities in Montana. Louis Bull and Samson near Hobbema sent large numbers once again. (Thanks Curly!) What is very exciting is that band councils are beginning to see the importance of this camp for their kids too.

A good number of kids are now counting on camp happening every summer so the number of returnees is growing. We've also noticed that those beyond our target 8-12 year olds really want to come back as ...

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Creator, Kids and Creation

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... campers. And, while there weren't enough to do a junior counselor training this year, plans are in the works to create a leadership training opportunity in 2011. This will contribute to camp sustainability and build counselor capacity in the young people for future camps.

Through the generosity, sacrifice and hard work of a great bunch of camp staff, and the generous donations of three foundations and several individuals, Our Creator and His son Jesus did a wonderful thing out at camp this summer! Thanks to all who contributed to making this the best camp yet!

Special thanks to camp coordinators, Michelle Nieviadomy and Matt and Jill Church and, to all the elders who gave of themselves to help make this a grand success.

Pray with us that opportunities for follow-up for all the kids can be created and implemented.

~Tim Stime~



Notes from the Field

Starting at the Beginning...

Realizing our Creator is Already There

How does a white guy talk to an Indian (or anyone for that matter) about Christ? That's the question I have been trying to answer in my recent study in the Word. My study of Genesis 1-2 was motivated by a paper presented by Terry LeBlanc at the NAIITS conference this June in Oregon. He stated that western theology often starts at Genesis Chapter 3 rather than Genesis Chapter 1. In some cases western thinking believers begin to enter into a conversation about Christ with an unbeliever at the point of sin, when humans messed it all up, rather than from the VERY beginning.

This idea launched me into a deeper study of Genesis Chapters 1-2 to seek a better understanding of the very beginning and a truer picture of the Creator. I wanted to know the whole story and what life was like for humankind before disobedience. I am still studying, but I have already gained a much clearer vision of God's relationship with His creation.



A conversation about the Creator recently came up with a Blackfeet young guy I was with working on the ranch, (which is my favorite arena for theological discussion). I asked him if he had ever been in a sweat, he said that he had, and the conversation was blown open into a great three hour discussion about his experiences with Blackfeet traditional religion, prayer, ceremonies, good and evil spirits, how to deal with the spirits, the Creator, who Jesus Christ is, etc.

At one point in the conversation he made reference to a story he heard of an animal talking, which reminded me of the serpent talking to Eve in the Garden. The conversation turned to Genesis and I mentioned the story from the Creator's Written Word about the crafty serpent, who tempted Eve, and Adam and Eve's disobedience. Before NAIITS my major focus would have remained here at the sin, but now I was able to share the entire story from the beginning of our relationship with the Creator before our disobedience, what life was like, how the Creator called "very good" the harmony of all creation and humankind working together, and how we have opportunity to be restored back to that through Christ. It was as though God had prepared me through Genesis 1-2 for this conversation. It was a perfect fit.

I have gained a much deeper appreciation for creation and its role in pointing us to the Creator. This is definitely something I can continue to learn from my Native American friends. As I spoke with this young guy, in many ways he pointed me to the Creator. At one point during the conversation in the truck, he began to sing the Creator Song. As I was holding back the tears, I was quickly reminded of how very much that all First Nations people have to offer me and the entire kingdom of God. The Creator was there in the beginning and is there in this guy's life. Who was really ministering to whom?

Our prayer request would be: For us to know the Creator and live out His love in clear and relevant ways.

~Summer & Wes Graham~

Reflections

Right from the start and throughout the week there was a spirit of kindness and cooperation. Little Norman needed some help in blowing up his mattress and as we were working away at it, his tipi mate Troy came up and asked us if he needed some help.

“Sure could!” The boys took turns pumping up the air mattress.

“What’s your name?” asked Norman. “Troy”, the boy replied.

“Will you be my friend?” “Sure, why not!”

And good friends they were during the whole week.



Prayer Needs

- ⇒ For the Grahams as they share their vision with friends in the mid-west
- ⇒ For Jen Cole as she settles into her new role as Director of Advancement
- ⇒ For health issues MPI staff are facing
- ⇒ For Adrian, Terry and Ray for the still numerous writing and speaking assignments.
- ⇒ For Catherine Aldred in a tough linguistics program at McGill
- ⇒ Rick Martin—on sabbatical—he finishes his 3 months at the end of October

Stories of Hope... Believe our Story, Be our Friend

Since our inception My People International personnel have been at the forefront in the development of resources to bring healing to First Peoples – in Canada, the USA and elsewhere in the world. From the contextually adapted Allender booklet When Trust is Broken, the development of the dynamic small group ministry, Inenimowin Circle, training individuals to help traumatized and abused people within their own communities, to the production of Through the Pain, a suicide prevention and intervention dvd, My People International is known for such healing resources.

Because of My People International’s reputation as a leader in this area, a Wycliffe friend recently asked if MPI staffer Linda Martin (who has a significant reputation all her own in this area), could assist them in a project they thought might be useful to First Peoples in North America, where they have been involved as Bible translator and literacy specialists for many years. Below is Linda’s account of the project.

Last month I spent a week and a half in Dallas, Texas with Wycliffe International attending their “Trauma Healing” workshop. They have been providing training and personal support to local pastors and mission workers for a number of years in areas of the world where war is part of the people’s life experience. It is one way to help churches become more effective – supporting people who suffer from such traumatic experiences.

Recently, it has been on their hearts to bring such training to Aboriginal people groups in North America. This is how I came to be invited to a seminar on the program and to be part of the working group the last two days. As a team of working professionals we studied the original training materials and considered how they could be made relevant to issues Aboriginal people in North America struggle with.

Obviously, war is not an issue that my people group struggles with in North America. But the common experience that we share with others from around the world is trauma. Our distress comes from untimely, tragic deaths such as suicides, accidents, and homicides – not from war. Nevertheless, it is trauma. In the workshop we considered these commonalities and how counseling methods used for war-torn peoples could be integrated into the teaching material for Aboriginal peoples in North America. As part of this adaptation process, I have been invited to be on the editing team and, perhaps, be part of an implementation pilot project in some Aboriginal community.

It was a very meaningful experience for me. Someone wanted to hear from us, listening to the pain we Aboriginal people experience and carry. I’ve had this experience before when I started my own healing journey. When I started feeling that people were listening and that I was really being heard, there was such a deep level of healing that took place in my life. It validated the pain that I had carried for so long – that it wasn’t just in my head. There was a similar experience at this meeting as people listened to me those two days we had together. .

The question that most people pose to Aboriginal people about such issues is: What can we do to help? My answer to them is invariably: “Believe our story and be our friend.” This goes so very far and so very deep. When people believed my story and became my friend, I experienced freedom about who I was and who I am. When this kind of healing happened I could then become part of the healing process of my people. This is the kind of healing my people need...and which My People International is bringing.

~Linda Martin~

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Dates and Events ...

More news at...

www.

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and
www.naiits.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.”

Upcoming Staff Events—Dates and Places ...

November 11-14—**Aboriginal Ministries Council Meeting**—Terry, Ray and Adrian attending
December 8-12—**Speakers Retreat with Tony Campolo**—Terry and Ray
January 8-18—**8th World Christian Gathering on Indigenous People**—New Zealand—Terry and Bev attending

Training Events—Dates and Places...

October 16-26—**Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization**—Terry and Ray are delegates
November 4-7—**Nēstooāāk and Dancing the Way**, St Paul, MN—**RESCHEDULED—New Dates TBA**
November 8,9—**NAIITS PhD planning with University of Dundee in Edmonton**—Ray and Terry
November 26—**People’s Church Meetings**—Terry
November 29-Dec 3—**Yonge Street Mission Training**—Terry teaching
May 15-19, 2011— **Inenimowin Circle**, Camp Arnes, MB—MPI Staff

KEEP YOUR EYS ON THE WEB FOR MORE DETAILS AND OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS...

Inenimowin Circle (sharing our hearts together)

May 15-19, 2011, Camp Arnes - north of Winnipeg, MB on beautiful Lake Winnipeg

To move beyond the hurts of the past we need a safe place to be able to talk and dream, laugh and cry, grow and live. Inenimowin Circle is a place where you continue your healing journey and learn to guide others on their healing journey via small group training. If you are a follower of Jesus the Wounded Healer and in a position of leadership and interested in attending this 5-day training you are welcome to apply.

We have limited spaces available, so apply early. The cost is \$600/person which includes meals, lodging, course material and training by godly First Nations leaders. Look for the brochure on the My People International website (www.mypeopleinternational.com) or contact Marlene Wiebe at 204 632-5100 or e-mail: inenimowin-circle@shaw.ca

