



# Indigenews

My People International

Fall 2009  
Volume IV, Issue 4

## Board of Directors

Cheryl Bear, Chair, Carrier Sekani, Musician, Pastor

Richard Twiss, Vice-Chair, Lakota, Pres. Wiconi, International

Shari Russell, Treas., Saulteaux, Corps Officer, Salvation Army

Rev. Dr. Evert Busink, Dutch, Sect'y, Pastor, Brandon, MB

Wendy Peterson, Metis, Faculty, Providence Seminary

Randy Woodley, Keetowah, Faculty, George Fox Seminary

Cornelius Buller, German CDN, Exec. Director, UYA,

Casey Church, Pottawotomi, Pastor, Albuquerque Native Fellowship

Frank Bucholtz,, German CDN, Freelance Writer, Surrey, BC

Dave Hood, Norske/Scot, Graphic Designer, Seattle, WA

## Staff & Spouses

Ray and Elaine Aldred (Cree)

Roger and Tammy Boyer (Ojibway)

Adrian Jacobs (Cayuga)

Terry & Bev LeBlanc (Mi'kmaq/Acadian)

Rick and Linda Martin (Cree)

Tim & Yin Mooi Stime (Norwegian)

Winona Yellowhammer (Lakota)

Matt LeBlanc, Mi'kmaq/Acadian

## Associates

Laurie and John Conway (Euro-American)

Celine & Hector Genest (Huron/French Canadian)

Summer & Wes Graham (Euro-American)

Anita Keith (Mohawk)

Hannah Haiu (Maori)

## Inside this issue...

**Emergence...** here at home—p. 2

**Coming Events**—p. 3 and 4

*Beyond a Problem*—p.3

*Tacking the economic storm*—p. 4

## “Creator Came Down”...

Christian camping is not MPI's main focus—in fact, in the establishment of MPI's main elements of ministry in our beginnings, it wasn't even on the radar. We started involvement in kids camp six years ago when our home church encouraged us to help meet the need of a group of First Nations kids in a more culturally appropriate way. We were, after all, the “experts” in cultural appropriateness.

We have continued since then, in each of the past five years, to offer one camp per year because there continued to be an expressed need. This year was by far the most incredible year ever—fifty-six kids, a number of families at the end of the week, more First Nations volunteers than ever and, a tremendous sense that God met us in powerful ways. So, in light of all that, we decided to spend some time in this newsletter on a couple of reflections from camp—one by Associate Staff Summer Graham, the other by camp nurse, Helen Rempel.



*(Last month in our short regular letter, I shared a brief section from Summer Graham's reflections on our sixth Kids Culture Camp. A number of people asked for (in Paul Harvey's inimitable phraseology) the rest of the story. So, here it is in Summer's own words.)*

## Reflections from a Grateful Heart

*As I answered the phone at 6:00 Tuesday morning, I never expected it to be Justin already anxiously anticipating his ride coming three hours later. I mean, this is a kid who often may not wake up until 1:00 in the afternoon and yet his enthusiasm was contagious. The other kids were already infected as they hopped in the van later that morning and we headed on our 289 mile voyage to Pioneer Lodge for 2009 Kids' Culture Camp!*

*Some may call it magical, others miraculous, while still others simply describe it as the mysteries of an abundantly giving*

*God...for this wasn't just any old camp. During this camp the Creator Came Down and joined us!*

*To those who had eyes to see and ears to hear, you noticed Him working, playing, serving and enjoying. He was there when we arrived and when we greeted the nervous and timid kids who didn't know another soul. He was in each welcoming hug and warm smile. He was the strength the kids needed to use their post hole diggers and the power that unified the clans each kid was placed in to allow them to raise the camp arbor. Did you notice?*

*There He was at the horse barn when Victoria was so afraid to mount the horse. He empowered the camp staff with encouraging words for 25 minutes to help her overcome her fear and get on. I saw Him sitting with Koby at crafts when he first tried to start beading his bag. His chubby little fingers just couldn't get the needle to come up in the right spot and though he was ready to quit a steady hand helped him get it, enabling Koby with the confidence necessary to keep working.*

*I could hear the Creator laughing with the kids in the pool and see Him doing a huge cannon ball soaking all the spectators! I witnessed Him creatively inspiring children during the games time to become “ants” who then marvellously worked together to transport their “queen aunties” to their new home. I'm sure you heard Him—cheering “Hip Hip Hooray” with the rest of us at their triumph!*

*Through the week, everyone saw Him...*

- ◇ *in the tipi with tired leaders;*
- ◇ *with staff comforting homesick campers;*
- ◇ *around the fire making bannock;*
- ◇ *on the lacrosse field with each successful first scoop;*
- ◇ *in the dining hall enjoying lasagne and garlic bread with each table full of ravenous kids;*
- ◇ *during the day we spent out enjoying the beauty of the land as we ran through the trees.*

*And, I know you saw Him in so many other places as well... around the drum circle singing praise in the lyrics of the song uncle Terry was teaching—“Creator came down as a child to give us life, hope and peace.”*

*He was there each morning; dew resting on the grass, sun peeking through the trees as Uncle Terry took the ‘smudge’ around the circle of kids and prayed. Every morning our Creator placed His scarred hand upon their heads, blessing them with His grace. He spoke through Uncle Terry's campfire stories and through all the elders' words regarding respect, humility, courage, and love.*

*The lessons went home too. When a kid cut in front of Justin at archery, He instructed Justin to humbly step aside, reminding him to consider others—that the last shall be first in the Creator's upside-down kingdom.*

*See Reflections...cont'd on P. 2*

## Stories of Hope...

This month, we have a couple of stories of some things “in-the-works.” These stories express our hope for the future in some different ways. They share some news of the growing edges of the ministry and changes which will make the ministry more defined and effective...

In the first—it is actually several stories collected in one place—describes a bit about iEmergence. iEmergence is the vision of the next generations of indigenous youth. It is an expression of mission to their generation and beyond, moving outward within the indigenous world to reach youth with the message of Jesus

## iEmergence

For the past two years (longer in the dreaming) indigenous youth have been working on an expression of mission that would uniquely reflect who they are as they go with the gospel. It is a vision which I am sure you will agree, as you read on, certainly captures the sense in which the globe has shrunk significantly—even in the 10 years since My People International began.

iEmergence was formally received by the My People International Board of Directors in June of this year, as a fully supported ministry within My People International. I hope you will enjoy their newsletter enclosed with this one.

North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies



A second story is that as of June 4 of this year, the US arm of the North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies was merged with My People International (you will note the new, combined, board listed on the first page). Under Canadian law, NAIITS in Canada will dissolve at the end of this fiscal year in favour of becoming a part of the newly configured ministry of My People International. There are significant savings of time and money that will result but, more importantly, greater opportunities for teaching and training will be realized and new forms of mission will result.



Other convergences are in the works as well. We'll bring more to you about what this will mean in the coming months...

~Terry LeBlanc~

## Reflections (Cont'd from P. 1)

*Everywhere we went and in every situation of camp, He came pouring out His love as usual. Jesus walked among us in the flesh in every place and every circumstance.*

*As we drove home chattering about all the great moments during the week of camp; as we talked about God's abundant love for us in Jesus—about the love He shared with us through each and every person, He was there. When LaJoy and I talked over the snoring of the rest of the worn-out kids. And she shared with me about what she had to face as she returned home—not very nice—He was most definitely there. So I was confident He will be there with her at home too. After all.... the Creator Came Down....Not only to create a magical, miraculous, mysteriously great camp.... but to love us, live in us, and empower us to walk with Him.*

*And that's something worthy of Justin's contagious enthusiasm.*

~Summer Graham~



## Nursing the Need for Camp...

I have been meaning to write a few of the things I witnessed firsthand at the Culture Camp 2009:

- ⇒ incredible Indigenous cultural contextualization of the gospel—answers to prayer;
- ⇒ the final day with parents there, a camper showed his finished craft to the parents...I overheard one parent fingering it asking, "Who did this for you?" The camper responded, "I did it myself!" I helped the camper explain to the parents how each camper had the freedom to choose and even design the symbol they wished to have beaded on the bag, and that the campers did beading, sewing and snipping the leather for fringes.
- ⇒ a camper pulled his finished craft towards himself, leaned forward with his arms around it hugging it to his chest after he kissed it...and I overheard him whisper, "SPECIAL!" as he did so.
- ⇒ numerous positive comments by parents coming to pick up their children...

As I reflected on the week of camp, I couldn't help but wonder whether the leadership of this organization had taken the missions courses I had: *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement—Issues & Trends in Global Missions*.

I have been speaking of this camp ever since and am keeping my eyes & ears open for more staff. I've had First Nations children asking when it is—they already want to go next year...

What's more, I've got a First Nations nurse expressing a desire to go. I see only good things with greater growth—this camp doubling for next year & we need to be prepared. Keep me posted/ informed and involved in whatever way I can. It was an incredible camp experience—quite memorable!

Keep it going...continuing to pray...much love & His blessings,

~Helen, Camp Nurse~

## Inenimowin...

September, 2009

Tansi,

*In light of the continuing need of our people to pursue a path of healing and find peace in the aftermath of the residential schools era, we have developed a program by and for First Nations people called Inenimowin - "Speaking from our Hearts." Our focus in the week of time we spend together, is to help people through their own journey to begin to see how they might help others to heal.*

*This is an excellent training workshop for individuals who would like to lead support groups for those who have suffered abuse (sexual, physical or emotional/spiritual) or, who have experienced great disappointment which has left them unable to function well in their families and communities. Once individuals have a clear understanding of the way forward in their own healing, they can be an invaluable help for others in the community who are struggling to overcome the trauma of abuse and achieve a state of health and well-being. In that sense, this is very much a community-focused program.*

*The brochure enclosed provides more particulars.*

*For further information and to enrol, call Marlene at 204.632.5100 or email office@mypeopleinternational.com.*

*Welei, Mi'igwetch...*

*Ray Aldred, Cree, PhD (ADB)*

## Staff Notes...

We're saddened—but also excited to let you know about a change in staff which took place effective September 1.

Roger Boyer, who has been working with MPI for the past two and a half years in youth work, has accepted a position in Health and Community Services with his Band at Blind River, ON. Roger has already moved to Ontario to take up the position and Tammy will follow later this fall. She is making final arrangements for the move in the next weeks. Please remember Tammy especially at this time as she shoulders the responsibility to tidy things up and readies herself to move.

Congratulations Roger and Tammy!! We all look forward to hearing good things about your work in the community. Our prayers are with you.



*~ The Board, Staff and Associates of MPI, NAIITS and iEmergence*

*"After hearing these stories and seeing these things, I heard my heartbeat. God birthed dreams in my teacher heart."*

*~ Osmosis Program participant~*

## Prayer Needs

- ⇒ ...for the MPI staff—funds continue to be tight and making it work has become an ongoing theme of our ministry...
- ⇒ ...for the efforts that will be made over the next six months to bring new people into the fold of MPI's ministry
- ⇒ ...Lajoy as she encounters the day-to-day of life after camp
- ⇒ ...likewise for the other young campers—that the seeds of hope planted in their hearts and minds will bring a harvest of peace, joy, beauty and especially faith
- ⇒ ...Camp planning for 2010—the team has met once and has much work to do for the coming year over these next few months
- ⇒ ...for partnership discussions so that we might, together with others, create a more effective ministry to Native people in the days ahead
- ⇒ ...for effective community ministry each week for staff and associate staff
- ⇒ ...Inenimowin Circle—November 22-26—that key leaders take this essential training so that they might be better able to bring healing to individuals and families in their communities
- ⇒ ...a number of our supporters and friends of the ministry who face difficult circumstances at the present time—many of us need this prayer
- ⇒ For wisdom for our First Nations leaders, elders and teachers
- ⇒ For Roger Boyer as he takes up new responsibilities with his band and continues as an associate staff with MPI

**My People International**

**Ground Mail**

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

P.O. Box 130061  
St. Paul, MN 55113-0001  
USA

**Phone, Fax, email and website**

Ph 780-727-4522  
Fax 780-727-4523  
office@mypeopleinternational.com

[www.mypeopleinternational.com](http://www.mypeopleinternational.com)

More news on our newly  
revamped website!

www.  
mypeopleinternational.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.”*

**Dates and Events ...**

*Upcoming Staff Dates (see the website for more details as they become available)*

Oct. 15-17—“Reading Scriptures...among U.S. Communities of Color”—Terry

Oct. 23-25—Abbotsford, “BC Leaders Weekend”, with City in Focus—Terry & Ray

October through January—Across Canada and the US, “Ministry Presentations and Fundraisers”—Staff—check the website for a location near you.

Nov 12—Seattle—Duwamish Longhouse (4705 W. Marginal Way SW Seattle, WA 98106) - 7:00 pm—“A Taste of FN Culture”—Dessert Evening

Jan. 21-23—MPI staff meeting in Alberta—all staff

March 4-6, 2010—Society for Pentecostal Studies Conference, Minneapolis, MN—Terry delivering a paper

**Training Events—Dates and Places...**

November 22-26—Inenimowin Circle—Camp Arnes, MB—Rick, Linda, Ray and Elaine, Adrian

October 7— “Ministry Training” with People’s Church, Toronto—Adrian, Terry

Nov. 15-Dec. 5—iEmergence, Philippines—Community Development training—Terry & Matt

June 10-12, 2010—NAIITS 7th Symposium. “In the Beginning: Our Chapter(s) in the Story”—Staff

**PLEASE NOTE** We are actively looking for partners for our Inenimowin Circle, Nēstooāāk and Men’s Mentoring programs. If you are interested in hosting one of these excellent training and ministry opportunities, contact Terry or Tim by email: [terry@mypeopleinternational.com](mailto:terry@mypeopleinternational.com) or [office@mypeopleinternational.com](mailto:office@mypeopleinternational.com)

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