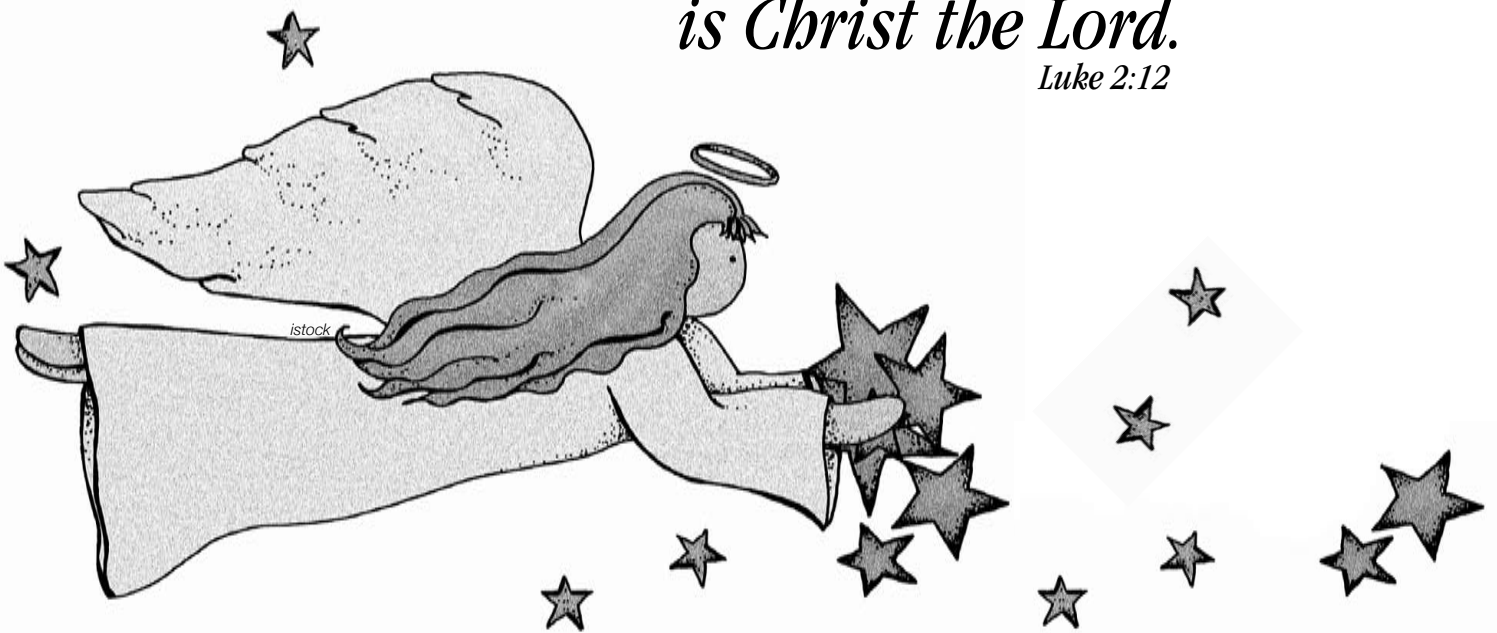


my friends Intototemak

Winter 2007 Vol. 36, No. 4

*Born to you this day in the
city of David a Saviour, who
is Christ the Lord.*

Luke 2:12



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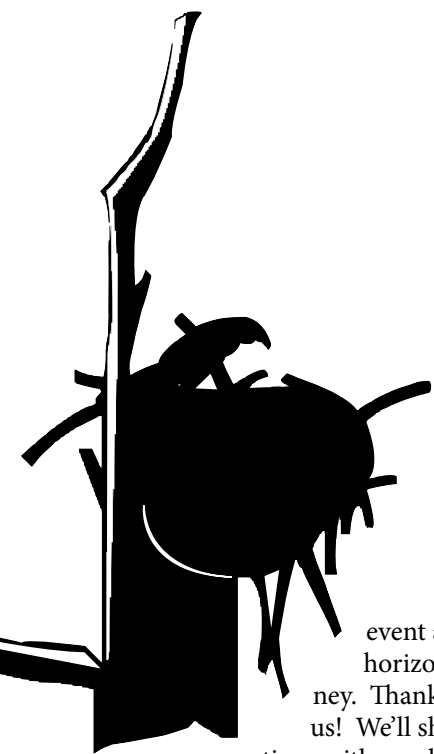
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Listening and Learning ...

This has been a fall of much travel, learning and sharing for us. Each event and contact has broadened our horizons and helped us on our journey. Thank you for sharing yourself with us! We'll share just a few of those connections with you here.

We enjoyed our time interacting with the Mennonite Central Committee Aboriginal Neighbours staff from across Canada at the end of September. We were hosted by Adrian Jacobs in his church on Six Nations in Ontario, near Brantford. Not only did we have the opportunity to physically visit the reserve and meet a number of people, we also felt the strength of the people and their strong desire and determination to work for justice on their long-outstanding land claims with the government. It was also heartening to hear some non-Aboriginal people speak out about the injustice they know has been perpetuated by the mass media regarding the peaceful protest that took place near Caledonia. Thank you to everyone who made that week special and shared of yourselves with us!

It is always a joy to meet with our Native Mennonite Ministries congregations in the United States. The fall council meeting was held in Clinton, Oklahoma – the site of Native Assembly 2008 the last week in July. We want to make it possible for as many people as possible to go from Canada. In order to arrange transportation, we need to have an idea of who wants to go. So **please let us know if you are interested in attending** – and don't forget that you will need to have a passport by then! More information will be coming on Assembly 2008 in the next months.

We have had opportunities to participate in worship services in several congregations this fall and meet many of you. We enjoy those times of interaction and hearing your stories. We were also privileged to attend the World AIDS Day event in Calgary that focused on HIV/AIDS in Aboriginal communities in Canada, and it was a real honour to meet both Chief Ovide Mercredi and Tom Jackson again. (See the article on page 6.)

Walter Franz's life among us was celebrated by many people at his funeral service in Altona, Manitoba on November 12. He had a real passion for Native Ministry and he put much time and energy into his work, both as a board member and then as the administrator in the Winnipeg office from 1991 until his retirement in 2005. Those of us on

It was also heartening to hear some non-Aboriginal people speak out about the injustice they know has been perpetuated by the mass media regarding the peaceful protest that took place near Caledonia.

the Native Ministries team over the years were a family, and we will all miss Walter's friendship, loyalty and commitment.

Social justice was another passion and one way of working at that for Walter was his strong involvement in Christian Peacemaker Teams, a "ministry of Biblically-based and spiritually-centered peacemaking [that] emphasizes creative public witness, non-violent direct action and protection of human rights." (taken from the CPT website)

Walter will be missed by many people across our church family and beyond. We send our sincere condolences to his wife Hilda and their family.

A number of years ago we wrote a play for our northern Manitoba congregation to present at our Christmas service. We adapted the Middle East circumstances of the Biblical story of Christ's birth and, instead, used imagery from a northern Canadian bush scene. We had trappers instead of shepherds, for example, and baby Jesus lay in a wooden fish box in a teepee. There were many comments made afterwards that the Christmas story had come alive to them in a way that had not happened before – all because it was no longer an abstract story. This time the message spoke directly to them in their own setting.

As we enter the Advent and Christmas season, may our hearts and minds acknowledge the true Prince of Peace and the gift He offers each one of us, a gift He asks us to pass on to others we come in contact with. May you experience the gifts of love, joy and peace in your life and family.

That is all we have for now. Migwetch.

Neill and Edith

—Neill and Edith von Gunten,
Co-Directors, Native Ministry



Intotemak

Publication # 40012495
December Winter 2007
Vol. 36, No. 4

Intotemak translates as *my friends* or *my clan* and are people who walk together as friends. Intotemak is a quarterly newsletter featuring news items of interest to friends of Native Ministry, published by Mennonite Church Canada Witness.

Purpose statement of Mennonite Church Canada Witness...is to lead, mobilize and resource the church to participate in holistic witness to Jesus Christ in a broken world, thus aligning the being and the doing of the church with God's work.

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Cost of Publication
\$15.00 a year for four issues.
Payments over \$15.00 per publication will be
receipted.
Please send payment by cheque, VISA or Mas-
terCard. Cheques are payable to Mennonite
Church Canada/Intotemak.

VISION HEALING & HOPE

God calls us to be
followers of
Jesus Christ and,
by the power of
the Holy Spirit, to grow
as communities
of grace, joy and peace,
so that God's healing and
hope flow through us
to the world.



Native Mennonite Ministries

The fall Native Mennonite Ministries council meeting was held at the Koinonia Mennonite Church in Clinton, Oklahoma from October 25 – 27, 2007. The Southern Cheyenne churches in the area will be hosting Native Assembly 2008 in the Clinton community from July 28 – 31.

Emily Collins of the Riverton (Manitoba) Fellowship Circle and Neill von Gunten of the Native Ministry office, Mennonite Church Canada Witness, made the journey to Oklahoma to participate in these meetings.



Marty Bender, centre, was presented with a Cheyenne Pendleton blanket at the October council meeting to honour her journey with Mennonite Mission Network. Bender is retiring after working with Native Mennonite Ministries council during its transition and formative years.

Topics on the agenda included sharing by the churches and agencies represented, the upcoming Native Assembly 2008, planning for representatives from the indigenous churches in the United States and Canada to visit their Paraguayan brothers and sisters in the Lord in 2009 after Mennonite World Conference Assembled, and other common agenda items.



Mark and Carol Roth of Philadelphia, Mississippi have accepted the position of part-time coordinating staff with Native Mennonite Ministries. This picture of their family was taken in Clinton, Oklahoma at the October 2007 meeting of NMM.

Riverton Gospel Jamboree

The Riverton Fellowship Circle congregation of Riverton, Manitoba hosted their 9th annual Gospel Jamboree on Sunday afternoon, November 4, 2007 at the Riverton Recreation Centre. The feature band was the Northern Gospel Lights Singers of Manigotagan and other performers joined them on the stage during the afternoon. Raffles, a silent auction, and delicious food also added to the afternoon's festivities.



Family Camp 2007 at Manigotagan

This past September 7th - 9th weekend was the 27th time God brought us together as a Family Camp. The site of the gathering was once again the beautiful Manigotagan Campground. A good number of campers came on Friday evening as usual; others arrived on Saturday.

I don't recall there being a specific theme for this year's gathering but it could have been "Shall We Gather at The River?"

It is such a beautiful place to gather. The constant sound of the water coming over Wood Falls as it makes its way to the big lake downstream, to Lake Winnipeg. It is music to the ears and blessings to the heart. God made everything good and blessed it (including us) with His unconditional love.

As people sat around their campfires on Friday evening reminiscing, one could feel the presence of the Lord. The geese were flying and it rained a bit. Although the rain dampened the firewood somewhat, it did not dampen the Spirit of God's people (the campers). Like always, people took it in stride and acknowledged that God was in control and that He was only watering His creation. He brought us here to this "holy ground" and all knew that He would watch over us. It was peaceful. Many sat around the campfires until nearly midnight before "hitting the sack," as we sometimes say.

Saturday morning was cool. The wind had changed overnight and was now blowing from the northeast. The clouds were heavy and somewhat dark; however, around mid-morning, God exerted a fresh breath of air and moved the clouds off. The sun became visible and its warmth could be felt both in our hearts and on our backs. It turned out to be a beautiful day. Once again, God kept His solemn promise that we would have a good day to celebrate.

On Saturday afternoon, as more people gathered, men, women and children formed teams of two (pairs) and played horseshoes. Many of the children competed and enjoyed it. Lance Wood and his partner (sorry, I can't remember who that was) turned out to be the champ. Congratulations, Lance and partner!



Photos courtesy Henry Neufeld

As usual there was lots of food and coffee and tea being served throughout the day and over the weekend.

On Saturday evening the Northern Light Gospel Singing was led by Billy and Doreen Meade, Charles Simard, Ruth Martin, Dennis Sinclair and others. It was great and much appreciated. However, as the evening went on, it became rather chilly and some of the older folks and those in wheel chairs who were not camping had to leave early, but not before receiving a special blessing.

On Sunday morning we were blessed with a beautiful sunrise. Although the night had been chilly for some, the dawn of the new day was welcomed. As people gathered around the big tent preparing

for the morning worship service at 11 o'clock, you could again feel the presence and love of the Lord. The Northern Light Gospel Singers were back to lead in the singing. I (Norman) led the worship service and Rev. Henry Neufeld delivered the Word of God to us. It was a touching message.

Immediately following the worship service, the tables were set for the feast. We had fed our spiritual being, now it was time to feed our physical being. It is a potluck arrangement and we are always so thankful that God's people bring so much food. God bless those hands that prepare and serve that food.

—Norman Meade, Winnipeg, Manitoba

MCC Manitoba Appoints New Aboriginal Neighbours Coordinator



Norman Meade

MCC Manitoba

Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba (MCCM) has appointed Norman Meade as coordinator for the Aboriginal Neighbours program, beginning September 4, 2007.

Meade will supervise both the Renewing Relationships and Social and Economic Justice wings of the Aboriginal Neighbours program.

Meade brings a broad work experience to the position. He has worked with the Manitoba Metis Federation, Consumers' Bureau of Manitoba and has connections to

Asubpeeschoseewagong Reflection

Clear-cuts and blueberries

Saint Francis of Assisi saw the beauty and interconnectedness of all things, which inspired him to write the Canticle of Brother Sun. Bonaventure writes that God is visible in his footprints, that is, in creation. Plants, animals, earth, air, wind, fire, people -- all bear the imprint of the Creator. Many of us have become so removed from the natural wonder of our world that we ignore the sacred connection of creatures - creation, to their Creator.

During our Christian Peacemaker Team delegation's visit to the Asubpeeschoseewagong (Grassy Narrows) First Nation, we had the opportunity to see, experience and learn from people who live in a way that respects the sacredness of life. We saw how a natural forest is a diverse, interdependent ecosystem.

We also saw clear-cuts and their results. In speaking of what is happening at Whiskey Jack Forest of Grassy Narrows, Brian Tuesday says that the people "are forced to disconnect from the very life that sustains them. The trees, the animals, the plants that they coexist with and had a living relationship with them are being destroyed." The clear-cut areas have been replaced with a monoculture of genetically engineered trees.

In a one-hour drive, we passed sev-



CPT, Chicago

eral of these tree farms. The clear-cuts destroyed the habitat of several species of animals and plants; their loss, in turn, became the loss of food, medicines and other resources that sustained three of the community's families.

Yet, there is hope. Normally, areas that have been clear-cut are chemically treated so that no other types of tree or vegetation can grow there besides grass, ensuring that the selected type of tree has no competition for soil nutrients. Pressure from Grassy Narrows and the four-year blockade contributed to the cessation of aerial spraying in the area, thus enabling some local vegetation to

re-establish itself.

Signs of life are returning. In one of these areas, blueberries abound. A host from Grassy Narrows invited our delegation to pick them. My fellow delegate, Pat McSherry, remarked on how surreal it was to see the contrast between the clear-cut and the thriving blueberries.

As suggested above, one can glimpse the image of God through the footprints of the Divine One in creation. Not only humans, but all of creation, bears the divine imprint of the Creator. Each microbe and being of creation is unique. Each deserves reverence and respect because of its singular manifestation of the Divine spark -- of God. Wanton destruction of creation without regard for its inherent sacredness is a form of sacrilege.

My experience of Grassy Narrows prompted me to reflect on what happens if the clear-cutting does not stop and the life of the Asubpeeschoseewagong First Nation is drained away. I cannot simply point the finger at others. I have to contemplate on how the Gospel is calling me respond to the question posed by Brian Tuesday, "What have we done to see that justice prevails?"

—Victoria Marie

Marie was part of the Christian Peacemaker Teams delegation to Northwest Ontario, August 16-26, 2007. Article provided by the Christian Peacemaker Team office in Chicago, Illinois.

We need to be able to build bridges between our churches and our cultures in order to work together.

many church and other communities, both within Winnipeg and throughout Manitoba.

"It's good to have relationships and to know what others are doing in their work," says Meade. "We need to be able to build bridges between our churches and our cultures in order to work together."

Meade is also a lay pastor at Manigotagan Community Chapel.

Meade and his wife, Thelma, have

two adult children and five grandchildren.

The Aboriginal Neighbours Program seeks to connect Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, groups and congregations to renew relationship between the two cultures and address issues of social and economic justice.

*MCC Manitoba news release
November 2, 2007*

MCC Alberta AIDS Awareness Event

About 280 people gathered in Calgary, Alberta on November 10, 2007 to hear Chief Ovide Mercredi and performer Tom Jackson, as part of a Mennonite Central Committee Alberta AIDS awareness and fundraising event. The evening was also jointly-sponsored by the United Way of Calgary and Mennonite Church Canada.

Five MCC-supported projects involving Indigenous people and HIV/AIDS were highlighted:

- Kenya (Presbyterian Church work with the Maasai, providing counseling and home-based care, support for orphans of AIDS, and AIDS testing);
- Guatemala (Youth Association of Q'Anil, providing educational workshops on HIV/AIDS prevention, sexuality, and family planning);
- British Columbia (HIV/AIDS workshops, public awareness and a support group for those living with HIV/AIDS);
- Northern Manitoba (Camp Hope and the Northern AIDS Research Centre in Thompson, Manitoba, represented by Ann Keciulus and Pam Groening); and
- Alberta (Community Justice Ministries, although not a formal AIDS program, works with present and former prisoners, some of whom are living with HIV/AIDS)

The evening began with five young girls side-stepping into the auditorium with their jingle dresses keeping time to their footwork. Then they stopped, only to begin again – this time accompanied by a circle of young drummers. This dance of peace was performed by youth from grades 7 to 12, all part of the Stobart Community High School Drum and Dance Group from Duck Lake, Saskatchewan.

The event was officially opened in prayer by Margaret Waterchief, a former Anglican priest, and now a retired Elder at Siksika Nation, east of Calgary. Menno Wiebe of Winnipeg, Manitoba (former Director of MCC's Native Concerns programs across Canada) introduced Tom Jackson and Chief Ovide Mercredi.

Before beginning his set, Tom Jackson challenged the audience not to try to change the whole world, but to commit to change our respective worlds and to believe in the power of one. He engaged



Neill and Edith von Gunten meet Ann Keciulus of Camp Hope and the Northern AIDS Research Centre in Thompson, Manitoba.

the audience in his usual easy rapport, sharing his natural humour, especially through stories of his escapades with his brother, Bernie. From the expressive, sultry rendition of Desperado to challenging the audience to howl at the moon, Tom took us on a journey of shared human experience through song.

Former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations and present Chief of the Misipawistik First Nation (Grand Rapids, Manitoba), Ovide Mercredi delivered a compelling presentation about the present situation among Aboriginal people in Canada, which included historical, political, legal, faith, and moral views.

In dealing with the impact of the past and present in Aboriginal communities in Canada, there must be an acknowledgement of the resulting wounds from the cumulative effects of colonization, multi-generational trauma from the residential school experience, lack of access to resources (particularly healthcare and education), and societal marginalization. Each of these issues is monumental and it was said that few Aboriginal leaders talk about AIDS because they are already overwhelmed by their current struggles.

The audience was encouraged to acknowledge differences between cultural groups and not to ignore them or pretend they don't exist. Whether the differences are of power, accessibility, control, status, or life experience, we need to respect one another and hear the other's view in order to work through the issues.

It seems that the government's response to poverty is welfare, yet people

need education, skills, and employment. The reality is that few Aboriginal communities are independent of government funding, and yet there is seldom an Aboriginal voice in matters concerning systemic inequities regarding access to healthcare, education, government legislation and land use. We heard more than once that these communities may not be able to handle AIDS, in addition to these challenges.

And still there is hope. Through creative initiatives involving cultural tourism, partnering with like-minded organizations, entrepreneurship, and advocating for local needs there is hope that sons and daughters who have left their communities will return to re-build them.

Chief Mercredi challenged the audience not to be tentative about meeting AIDS head on. But how can we do that if we are afraid, ignorant, or apathetic? AIDS is not the sole concern of a specific group of people; it affects us all, whether we realize it or not.

Neill and Edith von Gunten, Co-Directors, Native Ministry, Mennonite Church Canada, closed with a prayer, followed by a round dance that was led by the Stobart Drum and Dance Group.

As the evening came to an end, the audience was invited to join in the round dance. The diverse group of people joined hands, and I heard a small voice in my head say, "So what will you do to try to make things better?"

After the presentation, we received numerous responses and it appears the audience was somewhat polarized. For some, it was a difficult message to hear. For others, it was Truth requiring a response.

We all heard the same message, yet we received it differently. It reminds me of another Man I know who crossed socio-economic, political, cultural, and faith barriers to challenge us to live and treat one another in new and better ways.

—Allyson Lucas, Calgary, Alberta

Walter Franz; a man of wisdom and vision

August 10, 1940 to November 12, 2007

WINNIPEG, Manitoba — According to friends and family, Walter Edward Franz had the wisdom, vision and strength of an eagle, a creature of spiritual significance to aboriginal communities. Considering Walter's long-term commitment to Mennonite Church Canada's Native Ministries, this image is particularly appropriate.

Walter passed away on Wednesday November 7 after an 11 year struggle with chronic lymphocytic leukemia. His funeral was held at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church on the afternoon of Monday November 12.

Norman Meade, long time church leader, friend, and associate from Manigotagon, Manitoba, described a trip to Manigotagon just two days before the funeral. "I was travelling with my son and we saw 13 eagles. I'd never seen that many eagles together before." With his mind on the approaching funeral, he thought of the 12 disciples of Christ, plus one more; Walter Franz. Thirteen eagles. That idea resonated with him and it sparked the meditation he gave in tribute of Walter.

"Eagles have sharp vision, so did Walter," Norman said. "He was a prophet. Walter was also strong like the eagle."

Eagles have sharp vision, so did Walter, he was a prophet. Walter was also strong like the eagle.

The funeral, most of which Walter had previously planned himself, had a tone rich in aboriginal context and emphasized the idea of death as a passage. One of the selected hymns, "In the Bulb" spoke of the flower, a promise hidden in the bulb where only God can see it until the time has come for it to bloom. Highlighting this important element, each of Walter's grandchildren planted a bulb in a pot of soil during the family tribute.

Born in Tofield Alberta to George and Tena Franz, Walter spent his formative years on the family farm. In 1955 the Franz family moved to Edmonton



Walter Franz, pictured here with a scale model of a Native Ministry summer camp for Matheson Island, Manitoba. That dream was never fully realized.

where George pastored First Mennonite Church. Following in his father's footsteps, Walter chose ministry as a profession. After high school, he attended Menno Bible School in Didsbury, Alberta for one year, followed by four years of study at Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC), now Canadian Mennonite University.

Walter met his future wife, Hilda Penner, at CMBC. They were married in 1962 and welcomed their first daughter, Laurie, one year later. After graduating from CMBC, Walter pastored the Osler Mennonite Church in Saskatchewan for six years. Son Chris and daughter Tamara were born in Osler. From Osler, the family moved to Swift Current where Walter became principal of Swift Current Bible Institute (SCBI). The family grew again when in 1975, 7-year-old aboriginal son, Len, was adopted.

In 1979, the Franz family packed up their belongings and moved to Altona where Walter served as pastor of the Altona Bergthaler Mennonite church until 1990. It was during this time that Walter

began to assume various roles in the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (now Mennonite Church Canada), serving four years as conference moderator and eventually becoming Executive Director of the Native Ministry program, a role which he held until his retirement in September of 2005. He also served on the steering committee of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT). He took part in several CPT delegate assemblies, including one to Grassy Narrows, Ontario.

Walter's commitment to Aboriginal Peoples shaped his retirement years; he and Hilda continued their work in a volunteer capacity as part-time pastors to the Riverton Fellowship Circle. In a sense, Walter and Hilda traded places with Edith and Neill von Gunten, who left pastoral positions at Riverton Fellowship Circle to become co-directors of Native Ministries.

When Neill and Edith supervised church construction in Riverton at the aboriginal community's request, Walter was there to encourage them despite insurmountable odds. "He was there to say 'you're doing a good job. Keep it up.' That affirmation was very important," Neill said. Neill also described Walter as a visionary, taking note of details about people or situations that others might miss and seeing solutions where others could not.

Norman Meade felt Walter saw strengths and abilities in him that he was not aware of. "He encouraged me to step out and do more than I thought I could do."

Edith von Gunten remembers his tenacity regarding relationship development. "I know there were times after they moved to Riverton that Walter would say 'I can't seem to click with so-and-so. Tell me something about them that would help.'" So Edith or Neill would offer a suggestion and Walter would make another attempt to connect. He would continue trying until he succeeded.

Henry Neufeld, a long-time Native Ministry worker who has, like Walter,

Franz continued on page 8.

Building Bridges in Granisle

Hadih (hello!) My name is Steve Heinrichs. I'm the new pastor of Church of the Way, a small church supported in part by Mennonite Church British Columbia and Native Ministry, Mennonite Church Canada Witness, in the little lake-side village of Granisle, B.C. We are, by-in-large, a Euro-Canadian congregation. Yet there are many First Nations people living in the community and in nearby Tachet, a reserve of 100-150 people. My BIG dream is that we would, by the Spirit's reconciling work, become a congregation of many tribes, who worship the Creator revealed in Jesus.

So, in an effort to build bridges with our First Nations neighbors and to "evangelize and educate" the Euro-Canadian members of the church, Church of the Way invited Cheryl Bear and Randy Barnetson to come up Highway 118 and share their gifts of music and story this past Labor Day weekend. Cheryl and Randy are full-time pastors of First Nations Church in Los Angeles, California.

Cheryl is a powerful musician who combines contemporary Christian praise music with First Nations words, sounds, dress and dance. She's Carrier First Nation from the village of Nad'leh (Fraser Lake, BC). Randy is a gifted teacher who's able to communicate the gospel in culturally sensitive and relevant ways.



He's taken teams of First Nations to over thirty countries in the world to spread the gospel. Randy grew up in Vancouver and Port Hardy.

The service that Cheryl and Randy put on was wonderful, and, certainly, quite different than the usual Sunday morning worship experience at Church of the Way. Wearing a button blanket and playing her hand-drum and guitar, Cheryl sang and danced before the Lord and us. It was beautiful, and eye-opening. Many of us heard Christian worship for the first time that was authentically aboriginal.

Randy's message was quite challenging. He encouraged the congregation to open up their hearts and lives to First Nations people, not out of pity (the usual

motivation for "missions to indigenous peoples"), but because there are tremendous spiritual and social riches to be received in such a relationship. He used Jesus' parables of the lost coin and the prodigal son to drive home his point. The woman rejoices when she finds the lost money because it has value.

We Euro-Canadians should seek to build reconciling relationships with First Nations people because they have value and gifts to offer the church. In the story of the prodigal son, the father and his household put on a huge party, not only because the son is back on the good path but also because they get to enjoy relationship with him again ... they truly missed him! So it is with the Church of the Way. There are empty seats at our "dinner" table, and we're missing out by not having our First Nations neighbors sitting with us.

Not everyone agreed with Randy and Cheryl's message and music. But everyone was lovingly stretched and encouraged to think about what it means to be and do Church for all peoples.

If you can, I'd love it if you say a prayer or two for the Church of the Way and for me as we seek to live out the gospel of peace in light of Randy and Cheryl's challenge.

Nanahoost'en si (Goodbye!), and God's grace to you,

—Steve Heinrichs, Granisle, BC

Franz continued his ministry since retirement, also noticed Walter's efforts at connecting with others. "He didn't have the language, but he wanted to get to know the [aboriginal] people, what makes them tick, their culture, and so on."

"I will miss his openness and support and the way he reached out to other people," Henry said. He spoke of a group of Somali refugees that Walter and Hilda befriended and invited to live in their home. "He reached out to them to relate to them and to be of some service and help to them."

Niece Judith Friesen Epp said that both Walter and his wife Hilda had the ability to connect with a wide variety of people. "He and Hilda were models of faith for me. They were always the ones who welcomed many diverse people into

their home. There were always guests there."

Observing both family and church life, Judith noted that integrating work with everyday life was more seamless for Walter and Hilda than it was for many people. "It really was a life for them and not just a job," she said.

Hilda appreciated her husband's approach to others. "I always thought of him as wise, and never hasty to give ideas or impressions, non-judgemental. He had a gift to really listen. He saw the big picture, pulled the strings together."

She shared a story that she felt epitomized Walter's character. Two days before he died, a visitor asked how he was. Walter responded, "I believe I'm dying."

"What do you think heaven will be like?" the visitor asked.

In his quiet, thoughtful way, Walter responded. "I think it will be non-judge-

mental and the squabbles that plague us here on earth will be settled."

That, Hilda felt, was just like Walter. He refused to focus on himself.

Before Walter died, Hilda told him that she would miss his wisdom. Walter reminded her of Solomon's prayer asking God to anoint him with wisdom. He told Hilda that he had prayed for wisdom too, before he went into ministry.

"And I would say that his prayer was answered," Hilda said.

In his final hours, Walter Franz expressed gratitude for the opportunity to work with Aboriginal people. "Results for the future are not in church buildings or the institutional church," he said, "but in relationships."

Fitting words from a man of wisdom and vision.

—Mennonite Church Canada, news release, Deborah Froese.



Celebrations



Robin Atkinson and Kito Nishibata (above) of Matlock, Manitoba exchanged their marriage vows on September 15, 2007. Neill von Gunten officiated at the outdoor ceremony held at the Evergreen Gate Bed and Breakfast in St. Andrews, Manitoba.

Robin's parents are Cheryl and Shawn Loane, David Atkinson and Kim Storchuk of Selkirk, Manitoba; Pearl Selkirk of Pine Dock, Manitoba is Robin's grandmother. Kito's parents are Mori Nishibata and Tineke van den Berg. Congratulations, Robin and Kito!



Jane Whitlaw and Murray Monkman (above) of Winnipeg, Manitoba were married on September 22, 2007. Neill von Gunten officiated at the outdoor wedding at Assiniboine Park in Winnipeg.

Jane's parents are Scott and Nancy Whitlaw of Winnipeg; Murray's parents are Oliver and Lesley Monkman of Dugald, Manitoba. Congratulations, Jane and Murray!

Lynda McIvor and Boris Wright of Cross Lake, Manitoba, were married on August 31, 2007. Rev. Ernest McDonald officiated at the Friday morning ceremony which was held in the Cross Lake

Community Hall.

The wedding was beautiful and the day was also. Our family members were involved in the wedding party and both immediate families were in attendance. God blessed us with everything going right and everyone had a good time.

Lynda is the only daughter of Christina and Gerald McIvor of Cross Lake. Boris is the only son of Elizabeth Wright of Cormorant, Manitoba.

Mary Jane Simard (below) of Manigotagan, Manitoba celebrated her 80th birthday on November 21, 2007. Her children hosted a supper and dance in her honour at the Manigotagan Recreation Centre on Saturday, November 17, 2007 for their family and friends. Congratulations, Mary Jane, on achieving this milestone in your life!



Obituaries

Olive Bumstead (nee Gunnville) passed away in Brandon, Manitoba, on August 2, 2007 at the age of 84 years. Her ashes were buried in Manigotagan on August 18.

Olive was born in Hodgson, Manitoba but spent most of her childhood years in Winnipeg. Her family moved to Manigotagan after Olive graduated from high school and that is where she met her husband Randall. The young couple raised their family of two sons, Jim and Ron, on an eight-acre lot on the south side of the Manigotagan River. Randall died in 1977 but Olive remained in the community until late 2004, when she moved to Brandon to be closer to her son Jim and his wife Carol.

Olive enjoyed working in her large garden and harvesting its bounty, visiting her children and grandchildren in British

Columbia, painting, pottery and crocheting. She was also an active participant at the Manigotagan Community Chapel.

Olive is survived by her son Jim; grandsons Ross, Kevin, Sean and Derek; granddaughter Kayla; and great-grandsons Max and Zachary.

Raymond Duck, age 72 years of Winnipeg, Manitoba, passed away at the Seven Oaks Hospital on September 26, 2007. Menno Wiebe officiated at the funeral service, which was held at the Prairieland Aboriginal Funeral Home on October 1, and the burial at Brookside Cemetery that followed.

Raymond grew up in Bloodvein River, Manitoba and was a proud commercial fisherman on Lake Winnipeg, a hunter and a trapper. He was often called upon to cross the lake to pick up visitors to the community and take them back to their waiting vehicles on the mainland near Matheson Island. Raymond and his family moved to Winnipeg in 1974, where he was employed by Kinew Housing.

Menno Wiebe told the following story at the funeral service: "After one of his trapline trips Raymond and Agnes came over to our Bloodvein house for an evening over tea and for a few games of crokinole. It was during those evenings that Raymond told us of his pilgrimage of faith. He told us of the voice of God that he had heard while hunting in the distant woods. He had heard a song, faint at first, which grew stronger and clearer as he listened with keenest ears. The voice ... concluded with the words: Come unto me and I will give you rest.

Then, placing the cup of tea on the table, with the guitar at his side, and his feet tapping the rhythm, Raymond sang the song he had heard in the Bloodvein forest. Thereafter Raymond often sang that song in the Bloodvein chapel. He also made trips away from home to conferences in Winkler, Manitoba; to a school in Swift Current, Saskatchewan; and to a church leader's conference at Lame Deer, Montana. It was at these gatherings that Raymond gave testimony and sang the

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song he had heard in the woods.

Raymond is survived by his wife Agnes; children Arvin, Alvina, Brenda, Cyril, Larry, Norman, Ron, Ronnie, Emelda and Eugene; brothers Charlie and John; brother-in-laws Mike and Tache Green and sister-in-law Florence Fisher; numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

Raymond is predeceased by two daughters, one son, three great-grandchildren, and three sisters, Carol Duck, Florence Flett and Ethel Seymour.

—Menno Wiebe

October 2, 2007, Concord

Mary P. Owen of Pauingassi, Manitoba passed away on October 5, 2007 in her home at the age of 62 years. Mary was diagnosed with cancer in July and spent time in a Winnipeg hospital, but she was able to spend her last two months at home. Realizing there was no cure humanly speaking, Mary prepared for her passing by giving her life to the Lord.

She is survived by two sons, several foster children, her siblings and friends. She will be missed by many. Interment took place at Pauingassi with Allan Owen officiating.

Clifford William Krieger Jr., age 18 years of Winnipeg, Manitoba, died in a vehicle accident on October 16, 2007 near La Broquerie, Manitoba. Menno Wiebe officiated at the funeral service on October 22 at the Prairie Land Aboriginal Funeral Home in Winnipeg. Interment followed at Brookside Cemetery.

Clifford is survived by his parents Florence Duck and Clifford Krieger Sr.; his grandfather Charlie Duck of Bloodvein River, Manitoba; his foster parents, Susan and Dennis Freund; siblings, Christopher, Zach and Antonio Duck, Erica Duck Funk, and Brittany, Jessica, Colleen and Flori Krieger; uncle Ernie Duck, aunt Elaine Turtle and other relatives and friends.

—Menno Wiebe, friend of the family
October 20, 2007

Bernice Lynne Scott Potoski passed away

at the Health Sciences Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba on October 31, 2007, three days after her 64th birthday. Bernice grew up in Pine Dock, Manitoba, but spent most of her adult life living in Riverton. She was a founding member of the Riverton Fellowship Circle congregation and held leadership positions within the church for many years.

Bernice was proud of her Metis heritage and was an active supporter of the Manitoba Metis Federation. She served on numerous committees and boards on the locale, regional and provincial levels over the years. Most recently she was instrumental in the formation of the Metis Child and Family Services board. The MMF honoured Bernice by nominating her for the Ka Ni Kanichihk (“Those Who Lead”) “Keeping the Fires Burning” award in 2006.

Bernice was employed in the Gimli office of the Family Services department of the Province of Manitoba for over 27 years, retiring seven years ago because of ill health. Her job took her into the homes of many people in the Interlake region of Manitoba during those years, and she also opened her home to over forty teenagers for varying lengths of time.

Bernice is survived by her husband Michael; children Clarence/Gator (Gail) of Mexico, Corinna (Kevin) of Winnipeg, Charlene (Doyle) of Matheson Island, and Jim of Winnipeg; six grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; her siblings Brian, Gloria, Russell, Beverly, Denise, Olivia and John and their families; as well as numerous aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends.

A service was held at the Riverton Fellowship Circle on November 5 and the memorial service was held at the Manitoba Metis Federation building in Winnipeg on November 6. Neill von Gunten officiated at both services, with Barb Daniels assisting in Riverton.

William Porth of Riverton, Manitoba, passed away peacefully at the Seven Oaks Hospital in Winnipeg, Manitoba on November 1, 2007. A graveside service was held at the Riverton Community Cemetery on November 5, with

Neill von Gunten leading the service.

Bill lived his life along the shores of Lake Winnipeg and made a living by trapping and commercial fishing. In the off-season he worked as a heavy equipment operator. Bill was also an active supporter of the Riverton Fellowship Circle congregation.

Bill is survived by Gladys, the mother of his children; children Lyle, Terry (Kelly), Bev, Barry (Maureen), Marilyn (Leo), Harley (Annette), Dean (Janet), Tim (Lori), Les (Cindy), Lois; 21 grandchildren and 20 great-grandchildren; sister Margaret Forbister; numerous nieces, nephews and friends.



Resources

Coming Home: The Story of Tikinagan Child and Family Services by Maurice Brubacher together with the People of Tikinagan. Published by Maurice Brubacher and Tikinagan Child and Family Services, Sioux Lookout, Ontario, 2006.

Coming Home: The Story of Tikinagan Child and Family Services describes how a large First Nations child welfare agency in northwestern Ontario has dealt with numerous challenges to develop modern, culturally appropriate services based on traditional teachings and child-rearing customs. The book also contains a vision for how government and non-governmental organizations and First Nation communities and agencies can work as partners to create a positive future for children in remote and impoverished communities. (taken from the back cover)

Suicide Among Aboriginal People in Canada by Laurence J. Kirmayer, Gregory M. Brass, Tara Holton, Ken Paul, Cori Simpson and Caroline Tait. Ottawa, Ontario: The Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2007. This report is part of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation Research Series and can be ordered by telephone at #888-725-8886 (toll-free) or by e-mail at research@ahf.ca

This report focuses on definitions of suicide and suicidal behaviour, survey results and other epidemiology studies, the individual and societal origins of suicide, understanding and preventing suicide, and program tools.

“And who is my neighbour?”

Making friends with others includes learning about another’s background, taking an interest in their story and perhaps spending more time listening than sharing.

This past summer my family had the chance to make new friends (on the annual MCC BC Camping Trip, July 14 - 21, 2007). We met up with fellow campers and travelers on a journey that would take us through some of the ancient forests of Vancouver Island, to an ancient people now living in Alert Bay.

The trip to Port McNeil was actually pretty fun. Along with a ferry ride came the excitement that we were going to be meeting new friends, seeing new sights, and enjoying God’s creation.

As families congregated at a campsite in Campbell River, we had the chance to connect, get our bearings, and meet our traveling companions for the week. Walking through a forest that was planted by Conscientious Objectors from wars long past, we were given some pointers regarding forestry. Some of the issues were these:

How does one keep a forest sustainable?

How does one plan for the future?

What does it mean to be a steward of the environment?

It was really amazing to see just how much a forest can be used recreationally, educationally, and used to even grow food for a family! Seeing how one can work with the land, and live off the land, while still giving to the local and broader economy was very eye-opening for a city-slicker like me.

The core of the time was spent connecting with people representing the ‘Namgis First Nation. We were met by one of their elders, a local artist, Dave Jacobson. He took time off to show us his work studio / home, and tour us around Alert Bay. Dave is a living repository of his people’s history and continues to teach others through the creation of his art. Masks, canoes, bowls, cedar boxes, oars, and puppets were just a few of the pieces he shared with us as we learned about his people and some of the issues they faced.

One memory was very vivid for



me. While in Alert Bay, we saw an old, dilapidated red brick building covered in peeling paint. It reminded me of a prison or jail. Dave told me it was a closed-down residential school. “Notice the white has a hard time sticking to the red?” he asked, as he pointed to the flaking paint. We learned from personal testimony of some of the horrors that happened there.

Margaret shared with us over a campfire. As a child, she was not allowed to speak her mother tongue, and for fear of having their child punished, her parents stopped teaching her their language. Margaret was forced to learn English as her first language. The school is now a historical site.

As we headed toward the tallest totem pole in the world, we also passed what looked like a brand new hospital. Decorated with cedar to reflect the community, it was one of the outstanding buildings in the tiny village. “That’s our new addictions clinic,” Dave shared. It was good to know that care was being taken to help his people, but also very sobering to know that their community was plagued with substance abuse.

Highlights included visiting the U’mista Cultural Centre. U’mista loosely means “to return the treasures.” The Cultural Centre holds a vast and growing collection of masks and artifacts that are being returned from distant museums all over the world. We were also able to take in some cultural dance performances -- from the oldest members of the band who were singing, to the youngest (a three year-old) who was dancing, we enjoyed being hosted by a people rich in culture with a very strong sense of community.

What a sight to see as we witnessed the beauty of God’s creativity reflected in the ‘Namgis. We experienced hospitality and welcome and grace -- aspects of our Creator found within this portion of the cultural mosaic called humanity.

Everywhere we went in Alert Bay, Dave and Ernie were met by friends or family members, and unconscious to the passage of time,

stopped to talk and catch up with news. Dave, Ernie and Margaret, it was so good to meet you and get to know you. Thanks for the salmon barbeque! It was good to sit and talk, learn about your family, and even play soccer in the campground!

I appreciated the fact that these relationships were borne out of a natural one that Darryl Klassen (Aboriginal Neighbours Coordinator, MCC BC) has with the Jacobson family. This is what ministry is. It is relational. It’s about people. It’s about beginning conversations.

—David Chow, Vancouver, BC

Events Calendar

March 7 – 8, 2008

Aboriginal theologian Richard Twiss (Rosebud Lakota/Sioux), co-founder of Wiconi International in Vancouver, Washington, will speak in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

July 14 - 19, 2009

Mennonite World Conference gathering, Asuncion, Paraguay.

July 28 - 31, 2008

Native Assembly 2008 gathering in Clinton, Oklahoma.

For more events visit www.mennonitechurch.ca/events. Native Ministry related events can be submitted for the calendar. Submit events in writing to the mailing address on page 3, or email to imiller@mennonitechurch.ca.

