

my friends Intototemak

Summer 2007 Vol. 36, No. 2



Photo by Neill von Gunten

Women of the First Nations Christian Fellowship of Burnaby, B.C. presenting a jacket to their guest speaker, Adrian Jacobs.



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Coming Together under the Banner of God's Love

Adrian Jacobs from Six Nations in southern Ontario was the featured speaker in a series of afternoon and evening Listening Circles held in the Vancouver-Abbotsford-Chilliwack area of southern British Columbia from March 21-25, 2007. Other participants sharing at the evening programs were a number of Aboriginal people living in the area nearest the host church. Harley Eagle, Co-Coordinator of Mennonite Central Committee Canada's Aboriginal Neighbours program, also shared each evening, and both men shared in classes at Columbia Bible College during those days. Darryl Klassen of MCC BC Aboriginal Neighbours coordinated the Listening Circles, which were co-sponsored by Native Ministry, Mennonite Church Canada, and MCC BC.

Here is one person's reflection on one of Adrian's presentations:

True or False?

Aboriginal Creation Stories are purely mythical ...

Ancient Rituals are satanic ...

Native cultural practices dishonor Jesus ...

"Christian Longhouse" is a contradiction of terms ...

Indigenous Worship promotes idolatry ...



Witness

Coming together continued on page 4.



Hearing Each Other's Stories

Our hum-drum drive to the office this morning changed as we saw several families of geese in the grassy area on both sides of the busy street of our normal route. This was our first sighting of this year's baby goslings and it cheered up a dreary-weather day immediately! All these "first" sightings from the plant and animal world around us this spring remind us of our Creator God's care for everything that has been created. It is easy for us as human beings to become so busy and preoccupied that we miss out on the beauty around us and fail to recognize God's message for us through creation.

When we read Jesus' parables in the New Testament, we notice that he often ends with something like this: "Listen then, if you have ears to hear." Jesus knew how important stories are for helping us to understand His truths; He also knew that we as His followers have to come with open and receptive hearts in order to hear the message of His story. We have to have "our ears on" (in CB radio lingo) and want to listen.

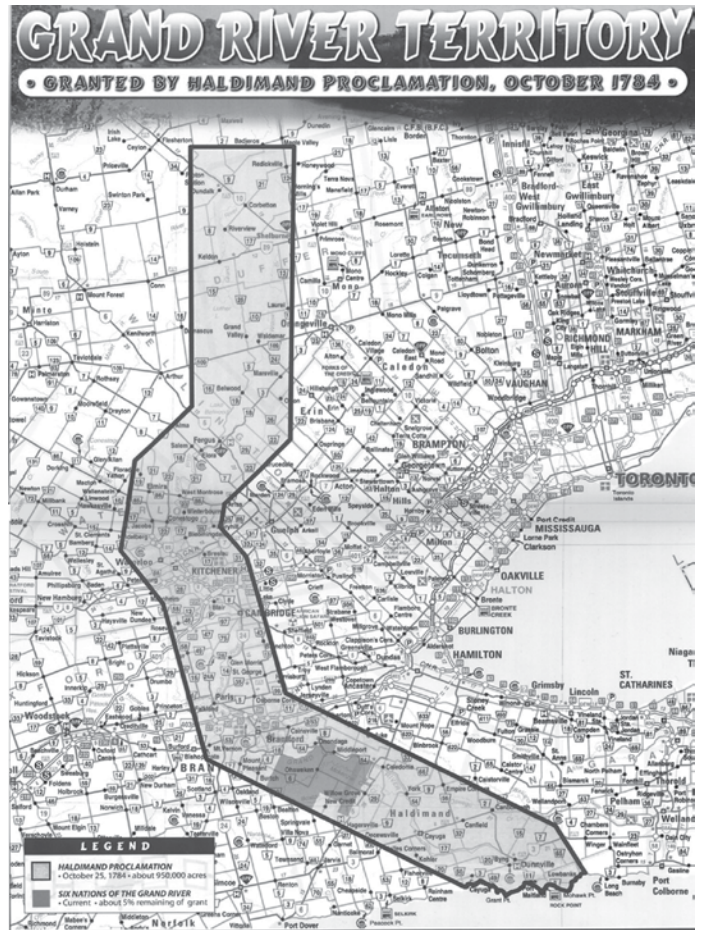
In our busy and preoccupied lives, it is easy to ignore, take for granted, or even forget our fellow travelers on this journey of life. We listen to the generalizations and stereotypes we hear around us about other cultural groups, for example, instead of taking the time to hear each other's stories.

We are happy to share two "listening circle" experiences with you in this issue – one from the Lower Mainland of southern British Columbia and one from Manitoba. These events this past spring serve to build bridges of understanding and encourage relationship-building between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural groups, as well as helping us learn more fully what the issues are around us.

When we sit together and listen to each other we have a human face to identify with instead of words on a page. We can begin to re-think any pre-conceived ideas we come with and can even envision building a relationship with another person.

These challenging words of Wilmer Froese are so true (He was talking about the Stoney Knoll experience in August 2006 – see the Fall and Winter 2006 issues of INTO-TEMAK for that poignant story):

"In life, there is always the opportunity to build bridges or walls ... we come here today to build bridges ... we come to seek peace and harmony, to extend our hand of friendship, to learn from each other, and to hear each others' stories ... we



choose today to be a voice for peace and reconciliation ... today may only be a small step, but we have so much to gain in peace, and so much to lose in hostility." (Taken from Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan Peace and Justice report 2006)

We continue to hear reports on the news about blockades and other calls for justice from the Aboriginal community across Canada during these summer months. In fact, the Assembly of First Nations is calling on all Canadian citizens and corporations to stand together with them on June 29, 2007, to insist that the Government of Canada respond to the crisis in First Nations communities.

Many people do not really know what this talk about justice is all about so we count on the government and the news media to tell us what is going on around us. Too often our stereotypes are only confirmed and strengthened as a result. Unfortunately, we do not hear the full story on the news – and stories are powerful ways of learning to know each other and

Eagles Nest continued on page 3.

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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**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.



A Place Beyond the Indian Act

Long-ignored Treaties are Key to Resolving Native Discontent

In Globe [the *Globe and Mail* newspaper] columnist John Ibbitson's recent commentary on the challenges Canada faces on aboriginal issues, he suggests a looming "summer of discontent." I agree with many of his points, particularly the need for urgency in honestly addressing and finally resolving long outstanding matters.

Society knows little about the treaties made with Canada's first nations, yet they are part of the fabric of our modern Constitution. Simply put, a treaty is a nation-to-nation agreement for mutual benefit. In coming together to make treaties, the Crown's objective was to settle and prosper on the new land in the west, without conflict from first nations. This objective has been achieved. The objectives of the first nations -- to share in the economic prosperity of the new society, secure a brother-to-brother relationship with the Crown, nurture their communities and protect their right to govern themselves -- have not.

In the years after the original treaties, the good intentions were replaced by the

assimilation policies of the Indian Act. Instead of mutual benefit, natives were prohibited from practising their own spirituality; children were taken from their parents and placed in residential schools; first nations people were not allowed to vote, to engage legal counsel, to leave their reserves without a pass. Rights enjoyed by other Canadians were denied them, with devastating consequences. It was only in the latter half of the 20th century that we finally began to recognize this and to move beyond assimilation policies. There is a place beyond the Indian Act, beyond marginalization and beyond confrontation, where first nations and the rest of Canadians must eventually meet. This place, far from today's turmoil, is at the intersection of the same cultural and political forces that originally caused first nations and the government to sign treaties. It's a place of hope and harmony, where the parties might recall the mutual benefits envisioned in treaty-making and recommit themselves to capturing modern opportunities.

Indian Act continued on page 9.

Eagles Nest

Continued from page 2.

bringing a human face to a situation.

Many people live near Aboriginal communities or are even part of the original treaty land base across Canada. We counted, for example, 23 Mennonite Church Canada congregations alone that worship within the Grand River Territory in southern Ontario and there are more of these congregations within a 30-mile radius of that territory.

So ... What does it mean to be a Mennonite, Anabaptist Peace Church in the midst of conflict in our own country and communities? Just talking about the need for peace has not worked. We need to become pro-active. We need to meet each other and hear each other's stories!

What would happen if ...

... together we chose to find ways to hear each other's stories?

... non-Aboriginal people decided to try to understand more fully what the issues are behind these volatile situations?

... we chose to walk together to find a just resolution to the on-going treaty, land and other issues the Aboriginal people have with the government?

We CAN make a difference! We have opportunities to build bridges of understanding instead of walls. We have opportunities to be voices for peace, reconciliation and restorative justice in the face of escalating unrest and possible violence. We are God's representatives, hands, feet and spokespersons to the world around us!

That is all we have for now. Migwetch.

Neill and Edith

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



Coming Together under the Banner of God's Love

Continued from page 1.

Before hearing Adrian Jacobs speak, many of those who attended his presentation may have answered TRUE to many, or even all, of the above statements. After considering the perspective of this Christian man who was raised in the traditional Longhouse of the Iroquois, some paradigms may have shifted.

Adrian began his presentation by painting a picture of his life on the reserve and how he met Jesus. He then moved on with the challenge to all of us to join with Jesus in the pursuit of social justice. We are brothers and sisters in God's family, he said, and we must support one another.

Adrian said that his native religion taught very good values; values that were strongly upheld in his family. No drunkenness, violence or unfaithfulness was found in his home. Instead, there was healthy respect for one another and abundant gratefulness to "the Creator". In contrast to his own home, however, he saw another side of life embodied by his neighbors: angry fists, drunken stupors, broken marriages and unhappy families. Since his neighbors were largely church-going Christians, he saw no good reason to consider becoming one of them. God, however, had other plans!

First it was Adrian's mom. Struggling with chronic illness that could not be cured by traditional healing rituals, she decided to attend a Christian conference offering prayer for the sick. When Jesus met her there and healed her completely, she knew that her life would be committed to following Him from then on.

Next it was a brother. During a near-death experience where he could literally feel his spirit leaving his body, Adrian's brother called out to Jesus for the first time. Jesus answered by giving him life, both in his body and in his spirit! A changed man emerged, all the while still praising "the Creator", only now calling Him by His name, Jesus Christ.

Still believing that Christianity was the "white man's religion", Adrian could not reconcile the difference he saw between what Jesus said and what His followers did. "Maybe they were not really Christians ... Maybe they just went



Photo by Neil von Gunten

First Nation women opening the evening gathering at First United Mennonite Church in Vancouver, BC.

to church to look good ... Maybe they just don't get it!" Adrian soon began to ask a different question, a question that must be asked by anyone who has ever wondered why other people don't measure up. He learned to ask, "What about me?"

Although disillusioned by many people, Adrian could not dismiss the dramatic life changes he had seen take place in his mother and brother. This reality forced him to look closely at his own life and ask, "What about me? How could God change my life?" He asked the question, and God gave him the answer!

Surrounded by creation, Adrian walked alone and spoke with God at the river's edge. "I don't understand all of this Creator God, but I come as a child. Accept me if You will!" After reading a prayer printed in the back of a small booklet, Adrian felt compelled to wash himself in the river. He remembers asking Jesus to wash him from his sins as he splashed the cool water onto his face. The murky waters of his soul that once churned suddenly felt as clear as glass and Adrian knew he had the peace of God.

As he became involved with the

church, Adrian began to believe that everything Aboriginal was evil. Supposing he could no longer be who he was, and still be a Christian, he took all of his native paraphernalia and burned it to ashes, quoting "... the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17b)

Sadly, his initial misunderstanding of God's heart was a reflection of common public opinion. Even native-led Bible colleges held no resources that included Aboriginal history and tradition. Grieved by this great divide, Adrian began to secretly research his roots. The questions that arose were abundant!

-- Did God exist in North America before European settlers came?

-- Could the Holy Spirit have inspired the holy man, Deganiwidah, also known as the Peacemaker?

-- Was it the love of God that compelled native leader Hyohnwatha to play his part in bringing about "The Great Peace" between all five Onkwehohweh nations in 1142AD?

To address these and other difficult questions, Adrian wrote a short book entitled, "Pagan Prophets and Heathen Believers". Consider this excerpt that challenges us to consider God's active role since the beginning:

God's Guiding Hand

"My experience at 18 and 19 years of age opened up a whole new world that God has used to train me to appreciate other cultures..."

Do you ever wonder about the way God seems to fit the little experiences of your life together in order to form a big picture that could never have been predicted by yourself or anyone else? Over 25 years ago a friend of mine asked me if I was interested in going to Little Grand Rapids, Manitoba to teach Vacation Bible School. She knew Henry and Elna Neufeld, who were taking a team up north for a week, and was interested in going along.

This happened when I was only about 18 years old and, unbeknownst to me, was to be the first of many cross-cultural learning experiences I would have in my life. The strange thing about all this is that I was a farm girl who had every intention of staying that way. I loved my life of haying and calving cows and gardening and feeding the chickens. But

I also had parents who encouraged me to try new things and to experience how other people lived.

So, I accepted the offer and met Henry and Elna for the very first time the night before we were to fly out to Little Grand Rapids. It was my first time flying and I was amazed at all the water and rocks and trees that we flew over on the way. It was a beautiful day as we landed on the lake and made our way to the teacherage where we would stay. The memories that stay with me most are the time we spent wandering about with the children of Little Grand. We picked delicious wild blueberries, and when it was too hot we went swimming.

The kids played some cute little pranks on us, like knocking on our door. With smiling faces and secretive looks they tried to get one of us girls to

"The Creator has always been at work in the world through general revelation and common grace available to all of humanity. His Spirit has always been at work in human hearts through their conscience ... Is it strange, then, that the Creator prepares people's hearts for the messengers and the message of the good news of Jesus Christ, His Son? He is at work even now preparing people to encounter Jesus Christ through our witness. *What we have failed to do is recognize and cooperatively work with his advance work. We sometimes think that everything must begin from scratch as though everything depends on our witness.* The Creator has already been on the scene and has already done significant work. Find out what He has already accomplished, cooperate with Him, and you will experience God as the fulfiller of human longing and desire ... Jesus Christ, the Great Peacemaker and Deliverer, is the ultimate fulfillment of this messianic hope among Aboriginal people."

The challenge laid out by Adrian at his presentation begs for a response. We must begin to recognize and embrace the fact that Christianity is NOT a "white man's religion" and that we are ALL equal under God. "We" do not have

all the answers to all of "their" problems, and "they" are not better than "us". We must come together under the banner of God's love to remove the barriers of what is, in fact, racism. Native people do not need to disregard their heritage to live as Christians; neither should they be required to disregard their heritage to live as Canadians.

The historical and current political injustices that face Aboriginal people in Canada today affect both Native and non-Native people alike. We must remove the "us" versus "them" mentality and realize that "we" are in this together.

Many people who attended this powerful presentation were stirred. One woman said, "I feel like I've just been freed from a spirit of ignorance and denial!" A man asked solemnly, "What can we do to help?" A local pastor advised, "Leaders must come together to strategize ways to respond to this challenge."

Jesus was a passionate pursuer of justice. Challenging people was often dangerous and risky. He was not a pushover! Aboriginal people are asking Canadians to join them as allies, friends and family in the pursuit of justice. It may be risky, and it may come with a cost. Let us stand with joined hands!

—Christy Koop, Langley, BC

allow them to put a hidden item into our outstretched hands. It turned out to be a baby mouse cupped in someone's hot little hand! It was a big joke when we gave them horrified looks.

At Little Grand I learned that people could stop by for a visit and say very little in the way of words, but a great deal in terms of transmission of feelings of affection. That week ended up being so much fun that I agreed to go back for the next summer's week of VBS. For 24 years I saved my very amateur photographs of the sweet little children of Little Grand Rapids; sadly, last year I tossed them out, thinking that phase of my life was long gone.

As the years have gone by since those days up north I have had many occasions to reflect on the things that that experience brought to me. When our children were aged five to fourteen, my husband and I decided to apply for a job in the Caribbean. We thought that living in another culture would be a great learning experience for us all.

Then several years ago I took a volunteer job with the crisis pregnancy centre in Brandon. Anytime a client that had difficulty with English came by, I was the one volunteering to take them.

Now, twenty-five years later, I find myself enrolled in the faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba, where many of the issues we are taught about involve cross-cultural awareness and the ability to empathize with people who are struggling to adapt to a completely different world. I am excited to see several Aboriginal students in my class and look forward to hearing their perspective. My experience at 18 and 19 years of age opened up a whole new world that God has used to train me to appreciate other cultures and be open to His leading to some unusual places. Now my children are old enough to travel and they too share my interest in cross-cultural learning. One of them spent eleven months in Indonesia with Mennonite Central Committee's SALT program. One small trip has had a huge impact on many people!

—Leah (Winters) Lees, Winnipeg, MB

Aboriginal Neighbours Workshop Series

Two workshop participants share their experience

Manitoba, as part of their Aboriginal Neighbours program, held a workshop series during the seven week period between Easter and Pentecost. The purpose of the series was for non-Aboriginal constituency members to wait, watch and discern together how the Risen Christ calls us to be in relationship to all nations.

Isaiah 65 was selected as a foundational text for the workshop series. In this passage the prophet's words describe the city of Jerusalem as a place of happiness and joy, whose inhabitants know only "shalom," the experience of peace and wholeness. Animals are drawn into this vision of the Peaceable Realm, and they display quite unnatural behaviours. How can a wolf, a lion, or a snake not attack a lamb, a deer, or a mouse for food?

Eric Law, theologian and multi-cultural church leader, stretches this image of the Peaceable Realm to say "that the cultures of the world are as numerous as the kinds of animals inhabiting the earth. Each culture has its own characteristics, values, and customs. Some are perceived as strong and some as weak. Some are more aggressive and some are considered passive and timid. If cultures are analogous to the different animals, then Isaiah becomes a vision of culturally diverse peoples living together in harmony and peace." The Peaceable Realm of Isaiah requires us to go against the instinct of our cultures in order for us to stop the fierce-devouring-the-timid scenario of inter-cultural relations.

For Law it is not a simple discussion of wolves/lambs; oppressors/victims – and simply needing to know who is who. The two realities overlap and exist side-by-side within each individual, depending on our experience. This duality is perfectly described by Jesus in the Lord's Prayer – *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us*. We are always both wolf and lamb, offenders and victims in relationship to our fellow human beings; but it takes a

Hard to hear tales about the injustices that continue to the present time (Did you know that the treatment of Manitoba's First Nations people by our government was the model for Apartheid in South Africa?).

wise and honest heart, and a community of faith committed to truth-telling and accountability, to know when we have been a wolf and when we have been a lamb.

The seven workshops were not planned to generate guilt, but in the midst of the story-telling there were difficult things to hear. Critical wounds of the heart have been inflicted in what is a difficult history of cross-cultural relations with Aboriginal people. This hurt is entrenched in the hearts of the victims of violence, and is expressed through reactions such as sadness, helplessness, hopelessness, resentment, hatred and the will to revenge. Sadly, there are times when the response of the oppressed, or those who work on their behalf, is in itself unjust and creates pain for the oppressor, who in turn strikes back -- the cycle of violence continues. The business of an eye-for-an-eye is ancient in its existence.

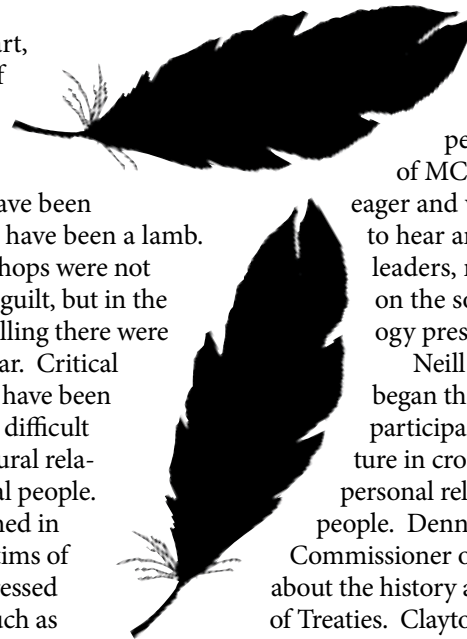
What was hoped is that these workshops will be about bringing an end to violence. That we will be able to name and acknowledge feelings of sadness, helplessness or resentment that we hear from another, or feel ourselves as we engage topics and listen to other voices -- and practice a way of responding that will not perpetuate violence, that will resist the temptation of acting on instinct, and thus bring about a taste of Peaceable Realm.

We had set our maximum enrolment as twenty participants, but interest exceeded what we could handle. We took

in 23 registrants, but also had to turn away other interested people. Clearly, a part of MCC's constituency is eager and wanting opportunities to hear and engage Aboriginal leaders, rather than depending on the sound-bites and mythology presented in the media.

Neill and Edith von Gunten began the series by helping the participants consider their posture in cross-cultural and interpersonal relations with Aboriginal people. Dennis White Bird, Treaty Commissioner of Manitoba, spoke about the history and current experience of Treaties. Clayton Sandy from the Government of Manitoba spoke about the impact of residential schools and the future of Aboriginal education. Thomas Eischen from Correctional Services Canada presented on CSC's continuum of care initiatives, which seek to address Aboriginal representation in the justice system. Barbara Shoomski (All Saints Anglican Church) and Elaine Bishop (North Point Douglas Women's Centre) spoke about the role and experience of women in Aboriginal culture. Ray Aldred, from My People International, led us through an important discussion around missiology and contextualization of Christianity among Aboriginal people.

Without exception, each presenter exuded hope amidst the challenges they face, truly embodying the long patience that has sustained them while they live amidst individual and systemic racism. The final session was led by Donovan Jacobs, MCC MB staff person, as we sought to answer the questions: So



If You're Not From Our Village

If you're not from our village,
you don't know our eagles,
you can't know our eagles,
flying around our river
to look for fish.

You will not know an eagle feather
when you find it in the grass,
You will not know an eagle's nest,
how big they are.

If you're not from our village,
you can't know our eagles.

*Christy George, age 14
Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School, BC
(used with permission)*

Recognizing Earlier Relationships

Bloomingtondale Mennonite Church in Bloomingtondale, Ontario, celebrated its 200th anniversary in 2006 with year-long activities of various kinds. One activity included a history moment during the last Sunday service of each month. The third history moment explored our early relationships with the First Nations near us and asked questions that explained honestly what happened and what is still happening.

During the festive and extended weekend celebration of Thanksgiving Week-end 2006, a cairn was dedicated in the village to the church's founding family of Yoch and Maria Schneider.

The stones from the cairn were gathered from the earliest farms in the area. In the litany written for the cairn unveiling and dedication ceremony, the first section declared: "We remember the native peoples who were here when the settlers arrived and give thanks for the help they gave to their new white neighbors." —Sally Russell Warrington, Bloomingtondale, ON



what? What difference does all this learning make? How will we be missionary with what we have learned? Hopefully people left with some sense of how their journey might be altered as we seek to learn how the Risen Christ calls us to relate to all nations.

—Jonathan Neufeld, Winnipeg, MB

I can't explain why I took the Aboriginal Neighbours course at the Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba offices between Easter and Pentecost. Many of the participants signed up because they work and interact with large numbers of First Nations people. Not me -- I do not work in such a field. I've had some previous exposure to the social and cultural history of Manitoba's Aboriginal people, and so there was no burning curiosity on my part. And yet, I felt that this was a good thing to do. Seeing Ray Aldred's name on the list of presenters also made signing up tempting. So, for no real reason, I signed up for this course, committing seven precious evenings to a night course.

When I got there, I found a friend from church, who also had the same reasons, or lack of clear reasons, for joining the course. And so, feeling spirit-led, we embarked on a journey.

I felt the significance of this action on the first night of the course. But I could not say what that significance was, or where it would lead. To be honest, I was a little scared – how painful would this journey be?

I appreciated that the course provided an opportunity for us to engage as much or as little as we wanted to with additional course readings. For my own purposes, I was content to just listen to the different Aboriginal leaders sharing their stories. As Jonathan Neufeld, our course coordinator, aptly put it: to "walk with" the speaker for a little while. This was significant for me, as I'm often not a very good listener, and this was an opportunity to slow down and just spend time.

And that time was well spent as we listened to presenters' personal stories and how they ended up where they are today. Hard to hear tales about the injustices that continue to the present time (Did you know that the treatment of Manitoba's First Nations people by our government was the model for Apartheid in South Africa?). Hearing how different Aboriginal groups have used



peaceful methods to protest injustice and change the balance. As a practicing Mennonite I could hardly help but be moved by these peace and justice stories.

It seems to me that the first step in dealing with injustice is to listen to the people's stories. Expecting these stories to be heart-wrenching and depressing, I reflected with my friend that something quite different had happened: We heard a message of hope. Unbelievably, all of our guest presenters imparted this message of optimism – not based on some innocent, pie-in-the-sky attitude, but grounded in something way more substantial. The hope that there is a future, and that healing, although it will take generations, will come.

For me, the course leaders gave me a gift – to slow down and listen, and to be invited to hear the story of some of these great leaders. I encourage all who feel compelled, for whatever reason, to take the course and walk for a while with these brothers and sisters who have so kindly invited us in. You will not go away empty-handed.

—Kirsten Schroeder, Director, Human Resources, Mennonite Church Canada

Finding Healing and God at Eagle's Wings

Fellowship Centre meets a legitimate need in Saskatchewan community

It's two o'clock on a Friday afternoon and, between getting his own vehicle fixed and helping someone at the Fellowship Centre, Ray Dumais has a few minutes to squeeze in a phone call. Even though it's been a breathless day for the new director of the four-month-old venture, Dumais is patient and calm on the phone.

Together with Mennonite Church Saskatchewan and MC Canada Native Ministry, Dumais opened the building late last fall because of a generation of need in his hometown of Prince Albert.

"Street people need a place to go where they can rest," he explains. His dream is to offer a haven where people will find both healing and God. He hopes the centre, which has a phone line and Internet access—a luxury for many transients, will be a help as people try to bring stability to their structure-less lives. They come in, he says, and work on their resumes or make calls about possible employment.

Open each day from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., the Fellowship Centre acts as a base of operations for some. "It is meeting a legitimate need," he says, while acknowledging some want to abuse the opportunity.

As an itinerant minister, Dumais has been involved off and on with Mennonites for the past 20 years. Before that, he spent two years living on the streets and knows the pain driving the addictions of drifters. Embracing the Christian faith came for him through a Mennonite Brethren pastor in Saskatoon. Later, he spent some time working in the Mennonite Central Committee thrift store in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, where he first got the idea for a much-needed place of rest. "They had a couch in there and coffee, and people would just come in and sit," says Dumais. "I thought this is pretty neat."

Last year, he began working with the MC Saskatchewan Ministries Commission, which hired him for three days a week to begin a house church in inner-city Saskatoon. After the six-month position ended, Dumais eventually be-



Ray Dumais (2nd from right) and friends, "Street people need a place to go where they can rest," said Dumais.

gan planning for the Fellowship Centre, now known as Eagle's Wings Ministry. Exodus 19:4 was the inspiration for the name he chose, particularly the second part. "...and how I carried you on eagle's wings."

Although initially funding the concept from his own pocket, Dumais now has support from MC Saskatchewan and MC Canada via Native Ministry. And while acknowledging that money is a constant worry, the soft-spoken Métis minister knows he has enough to pay the bills and draw a small monthly stipend. When that runs out, he looks for short-term work in the construction industry and also helps manage a small moving business for the less fortunate.

Neill and Edith von Gunten, co-directors of MC Canada Witness's Native Ministry, have worked with Dumais on the project. "There is such a need [in Prince Albert] for a drop-in centre," says Edith, pointing to a funding proposal written by Eric Olfert, which states that Prince Albert boasts four prisons and, when convicts are released, they often stay in the city of 43,000. Neill also

worked extensively with Dumais and others to clarify the vision put into the proposal.

Not surprisingly, Dumais himself experiences moments of doubt. "Sometimes I question whether I do anything good," he admits, but will continue to come for the regulars who find a place of safety in Prince Albert's downtown core at Eagle's Wings.

—Karin Fehderau, Saskatoon, SK
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A Note from Native Ministry...
Help us continue to bring you news featuring items related to Native Ministry. Donations towards the cost of publication lets us continue our walk together. Contact Ingrid Miller at imiller@mennonitechurch.ca

A Place Beyond the Indian Act

Long-ignored Treaties are Key to Resolving Native Discontent

Continued from page 3.

Through my 10-year tenure as Treaty Commissioner for Saskatchewan, many of the issues have been complex. People ask me every day whether there is hope for a better relationship, a better partnership between Canada and the first nations. They want to know whether there is hope that native people can share the peace, prosperity and harmony that is the very essence of Canadian society.

Does hope exist? The Office of the Treaty Commissioner has just published "Treaty Implementation: Fulfilling the Covenant," a report with 26 recommendations that suggest it does. The volume is a road map for implementing the original intent of the treaties, to honour the solemn contract and mobilize fundamental treaty concepts in a constructive context relevant today.

The report acknowledges the bleak reality that first nations have not benefited socially or economically in the same way as other Canadians. It acknowledges that the Indian Act controls the lives of natives from birth to death, with significant social consequences. It acknowledges that federal and provincial governments and first nations lack the focus and commitment to make treaties work. Most of all, it acknowledges that the status quo is unacceptable and unsustainable.

The report also makes clear that Canada's destiny is increasingly driven by demographics. The median age of Saskatchewan's aboriginal citizens is 18, while the median for other Canadians is 38. Half of the aboriginal population between 15 and 24 lives in the Prairie provinces. By 2015, 22 per cent of Saskatchewan's population will be aboriginal. In eight years, 46 per cent of children entering kindergarten in Saskatchewan will be aboriginal. This overwhelming demographic shift will crush the status quo.

Yet, this profile is, for a country facing an embedded shortage of skilled labour, filled with opportunity -- perhaps even with hope. That is why the treaty

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implementation report directs considerable focus to the potential for improving how young natives are educated. When the treaties were being negotiated, buffalo herds were disappearing and traditional means of making a living were changing. They envisioned education and agricultural skills for a new land-based economy. It was exactly the right idea, but the treaties were never properly implemented. To this day, we have not succeeded in ensuring equitable education in first nations communities.

That historic deficiency is why an education action plan is a key recommendation of the treaty implementation report. As we strengthen first nations control, as we improve education quality by establishing shared standards with provincial systems, as we support innovative development in mathematics and science education, distance learning, special education, gifted education, alternative education and accountability, we will finally create equitable opportunities for first nations students.

Education is the practical starting point for beginning modern-day treaty implementation. That is where there is hope. That hope is directly related to the political will on both sides to implement the treaties according to their spirit and intent.

—Judge David Arnot, Saskatoon, SK

Note: Judge David Arnot reminded those present at the Stoney Knoll event near Laird, Saskatchewan in August 2007 that "we are all treaty people." "The Treaties are sacred covenants, made between

the Crown, the Nation, and the Creator. They are never to be broken or put away. They are intended to be mutually beneficial. Treaty commitments which have not been lived up to are our national shame. Education and understanding about the Treaties will hopefully lead to greater respect and harmony between First Nation and settler communities."

(Taken from Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan Peace and Justice Report 2006)

A Cry From Inside

I was conceived out of your love.
I'm as innocent and peaceful as a dove.

I was gifted when the Creator smiled,
Because I was chosen to be your child.

So respect me please, and give me a good home.
Don't make me drink or smoke while inside your womb.

'Cause what you do, will make me weak.
I may become blind or unable to speak.

You may not see me but I'm still alive.
The sacrifices you make, before I arrive,

Will make me a child, both healthy and strong.
A precious little someone, who can do no wrong.

Think of me as a person, waiting to be born.
You will never again be lonely or forlorn.

I could become an inventor, a doctor or a leader.
I might even be a pilot on a commercial four-seater.

Life is a miracle, just a short sweet ride.
So listen for me, and stand firm with pride.

When you listen and when you carefully decide,
You will hear that voice, a cry from inside.

—George Tuccaro, Yellowknife, NWT



John and Joan Selkirk of Pine Dock, MB celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with a supper and social evening for their family and friends at the local community hall on Friday, March 23, 2007. Congratulations!

Hamilton Memorial Service

Friends and members of the Hamilton family gathered at the Bloodvein, MB Band Hall on Saturday afternoon, March 10, 2007 for a memorial/healing service. **Roland (Ron) Hamilton** and his sister-in-law Imelda felt that this type of event would be helpful for the entire family because of the immense pain that some were experiencing due to the many deaths in their family, and the fact that more lives were being destroyed as a result.

Shirley and Arnold Young sang two songs accompanied by the guitar, and Roland shared a poem that he had written for his mother at the time of her death ("Legacy of Love"). Abe and Ruth Hoepfner shared words of encouragement and read from Romans 8. Henry Neufeld based his sharing on the word "Remember" from Psalm 25:6-7, Luke 23:42 and Deuteronomy 6:4-9. He also sang an Ojibway song as he accompanied himself on the drum. Dave and Ruth Russell shared a song and others in attendance also shared during the open microphone time. Banners and a nice display of family pictures decorated the stage area of the hall.

The Hamilton family remembered their parents Harry (October 2000) and Harriet (April 1998); their siblings Maggie (July 1985)/Donald, James (December 1998)/Louisa, Fred (May 2000)/Emily, Maudina (May 2002)/William George (2006), Harry Jr. (infant), Melvin (July 1981), Morton (October 1995), Virginia (infant), Patrick (March 2003), Gordon (March 2003)/Florence, Harold (March 2003), as well as some nieces and nephews. Surviving siblings are Roderick/Emelda, Roland, and Noella, as well as many nieces and nephews.

The memorial/healing service was followed by a very delicious feast of

moose, turkey and all the trimmings, a feast that more than satisfied the appetites of all present. A service was then held at the Bloodvein Chapel in the evening.

We wish the family much strength and healing as they allow memories and God's strength to heal the pain of the losses they mourn.

Ruth Hoepfner, La Riviere, MB

Obituaries

Charlie Leveque of Little Grand Rapids, MB passed away at the Health Sciences Center in Winnipeg on March 8, 2007 at the age of 67 years. The family was living in Winnipeg for a number of years due to failing health, but Charlie had taken the lead in the Pentecostal Church at Little Grand Rapids for many years before that. He leaves to mourn his wife, children, grandchildren and many friends. Hilda Leveque officiated at the grave side service. Interment took place at Little Grand Rapids.

Glenda Duck of Bloodvein River, MB passed away in the St. Boniface Hospital in Winnipeg on March 28, 2007 at the age of 45 years. She needed dialysis the last four years and also underwent some amputations. Her husband Stanford and other family members were with her at the time of passing. Stanford prayed with her on her death bed and she gave her life to the Lord, which brought a great deal of joy to many. In addition to her husband, five daughters, four sons, sixteen grandchildren and many friends and relatives mourn Glenda's untimely passing. Interment took place at Bloodvein, with David Russell and Henry Neufeld officiating.

Charlie Keeper of Little Grand Rapids, MB passed away in his home at the age of 63 years on March 29, 2007. He is survived by his wife Janet, two daughters, two sons, four grandchildren and many friends and relatives. Interment took place at Little Grand Rapids, with Fr. Rheel Forest officiating.

Ernestine Pascal, age 22 years of

Paungassi, MB passed away on April 29, 2007. She was the victim of a severe beating and died on the medi-vac plane enroute to the hospital in Winnipeg. Her widowed mother Lydia and her siblings and friends are grief stricken at this happening. Allan Owen officiated at the burial in Paungassi.

Eleanor (Lena) Ethel Settee (nee Disbrowe) of Winnipeg, MB died peacefully with family by her side on Monday, April 30, 2007 at the Victoria Hospital in Winnipeg at the age of 89 years.

Lena was born to Frederick and Caroline (nee Berens) Disbrowe at the Hudson's Bay Post in Berens River, Manitoba and lived there until her marriage to Leonard Settee on November 12, 1936. They settled at Matheson Island, where they raised their family and spent most of their married life before moving to Winnipeg in 1963. Lena worked hard throughout her life to raise her large family, and endured much hardship and sorrow. Through it all she was a tower of strength to her family.

Lena is survived by her sons, Erland (Pat), Martin (Irene), Mervin and Glenn (Lynette); daughters, Elsie Monkman, Pat (Ken) Thomas, Eleanor Prince and Stella (Dennis) Grove; special nephew Harold Disbrowe (Rena); 30 grandchildren, 51 great-grandchildren, one great-great-granddaughter; her sister Elsie Monkman; sisters-in-law, Eva Disbrowe, Florence Wortman, Agnes Settee and Pauline Settee. She was predeceased by her husband Leonard in 1972; two sons; two daughters; two grandchildren; son-in-law Raymond Monkman; her parents and fourteen brothers and sisters.

The funeral service was held on May 4 at St Mark's Anglican Church in Winnipeg. Interment followed in St. Vital Cemetery.

Meave Bushie of Little Grand Rapids, MB passed away at the Riverview Health Centre in Winnipeg on May 1, 2007 after a long battle with cancer. She was 42 years old and leaves her husband Cornelius Scott, five children, and her siblings and friends to grieve her early



Mennonite Church Canada Resource Centre. You can find the Aboriginal list of resources for loan at <http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/77> or by calling the toll-free number 1-866-888-6785.

Treaty Implementation: Fulfilling the Covenant. Published by the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, Saskatoon, SK., 2007. 246 pages.

Did you ever wonder what all this talk of treaties is about? This report was written to set a foundation for the Treaty First Nations and the Government of Canada to revitalize their treaty relationship and fulfill their obligations to each other – “based upon four pillars of reconciliation: political, legal, socio-economic, and spiritual. Each of these is equally important and should be given

equal weight by the Parties.” (page viii) writes The Honourable Judge David M. Arnot, former Treaty Commissioner for Saskatchewan.

Learning to Fly: The Path of Biblical Discipleship (video). Distributed by Indian Life Ministries, Winnipeg, MB. 1998.

“A true to life story that illustrates the challenges of a new believer. A tragic event prompts Russ to accept Christ. Soon after he begins his new life, the joy begins to fade. He discovers that the struggles he hoped Christ had freed him from are still there. He feels alone and alienated. ... [This video] will show you that the Great Commission is more than making converts – it’s making disciples. That’s done through relationships.” (Taken from the video cover)

Obituaries continued.

passing. Meave committed her life to the Lord during her stay in the hospital. She was predeceased by her father, Jerry Bushie. Interment took place at Little Grand Rapids, with Henry Neufeld officiating.

Edward Green of Pauingassi, MB passed away suddenly on May 9, 2007 during a brief stay at Bloodvein, Manitoba, the community where he had grown up. Edward reached the age of 62 years. He was predeceased by his wife and one son. Left to mourn his sudden passing are five children, and other relatives and friends. Interment took place at Pauingassi, with Allan Owen officiating.

Shirley (Keeper) Dunsford, age of 69 years of Little Grand Rapids, MB passed away in Winnipeg on May 10, 2007 after a lengthy illness. She is survived by her husband Morris, four children, and her grandchildren, siblings, relatives and friends. She was predeceased by two children. The final service was held at the Catholic Church in Little Grand Rapids.

Carl Johnston of Pine Dock, MB died at the Gimli Community Health Centre

on June 2, 2007 at the age of 65 years.

Carl was born at Birch Point, raised in Fisher Bay, and lived in Matheson Island and Winnipeg before settling in Pine Dock in 1970. He was a commercial fisherman on Lake Winnipeg for many years, until recently retiring, and also served on the Pine Dock Community Council for 14 years. For many years before that he was a mate for Marine Transport on Lake Winnipeg. Music was a big part of Carl’s life, and he loved to play the guitar and sing and share that time with his family and friends. He was thrilled when his grandchildren learned to play the fiddle.

Carl is survived by his wife Marge; children, Karen, Dwayne (Laurie) and Edwin (Julie); grandchildren Trent, Carly, Dominic, Dakota, Leanne, Shayne and Bryson; brothers, Edgar and Louis (Joan); sisters, Millie (Frank), Vangie (Cliff), Pearl, Shadie and Laverne (Eugene); cousin Allan, who he thought of as a brother; numerous nieces and nephews and so many special friends.

A celebration of Carl’s life was held at the Pine Dock Community Hall on June 7, pastors Fred Peters and John Klassen officiating. Interment followed at the Pine Dock Cemetery.

Red Parka Mary by Peter Eyvindson. Illustrated by Rhian Brynjolson. Winnipeg, MB: Pemmican Publications Inc., 1996.

“Why is the little boy so afraid when he walks past his neighbor’s house? In this heart warming story, the boy soon comes to realize that his neighbor, *Red Parka Mary*, is really very friendly and he grows to appreciate and cherish their friendship. *Red Parka Mary* has so much to teach him.” (Taken from the back cover of this children’s book.)

Events Calendar



July 3-6, 2007

Mennonite Church Canada Assembly, Abbotsford, BC. Theme: “Built to Last.” Visit www.mennonitechurch.ca/events/abbottsford/.

July 17-20, 2007

Matheson Island Children’s Camp, Matheson Island, MB.

August 25 – 26, 2007

Bridging the Gap weekend in the arbor at Siksika First Nations, Gleichen, AB. For more information contact Todd and Simone Munro at phone #403-734-2434.

September 7-9, 2007

Family Camp, Manigotagan, MB, campground.

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.

