

my friends

Intotemak

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Witness



Walking Together in the Way of Jesus Christ

This especially large edition of INTOTEMAK comes as a result of two very significant events that happened in June and July of this year – the Aboriginal Learning Tour in the Saskatchewan River Valley north of Saskatoon in June and the indigenous learning tour to Paraguay and Argentina in July. Both events are very significant because they stretched the thinking and worldview of the participants and provided opportunities for sharing and learning from a host of brothers and sisters.

It was an amazing experience to be part of hearing indigenous people from Central, South and North America share with each other about their lives, cultures, churches and ministries as a colonized people. The similarities of experience in spite of the vast geographical and language differences were phenomenal. These events were a “first” for everyone. What is the next step to keep the conversation flowing?

We want the sharing in this issue to give you a feel for what happened and what the events meant to those who participated. We want these reflections to help you become a part of the learning tours. Hopefully you will also be stretched and learn from the experiences of others. As we heard numerous times during both events, our hearts and minds came together as we shared of ourselves with each other!

What significance do these gatherings have for the larger church? That will only be determined as each of us continues to build relationships with others, as we continue our desire to learn about issues other people are facing, as we walk alongside our brothers and sisters with respect, and as we strive for justice when we see the need to put our feet and resources into action.

May these themes from the Mennonite World Conference Assembly Gathered in Asuncion be an encouragement to each one of us as we reach out in our own context!

“Come together in the way of Jesus Christ” – This theme of the opening session of the Mennonite World Conference is an invitation to meet each other regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, cultural background or geographical homeland. Our commonality as attendees is the oneness we have through our faith in Jesus Christ.

“The way of Jesus Christ” calls us to recognize that we no longer need to be bound by the barriers we find in the society we

live in. Instead, Jesus Christ’s “way” is one of peace and reconciliation with God and between people, breaking down walls that separate us, and being active peacemakers in the world around us.

“Uniting in Christ” invites us to demonstrate to the world that Jesus Christ brings a new way of living to His followers. We can now be bound together by what we have in common, not dominated by the differences.

“Serving like Christ” provides a desire to reach out in the myriad of opportunities around us to spread Christ’s message of healing, hope, peace and reconciliation.

“Go together in the way of Jesus Christ” sends us out as individuals and a larger faith body into our families, churches, communities, nation and world as a witness of the power of Jesus Christ to change hearts and lives.

The REACHING UP TO GOD OUR CREATOR resource box continues to be used by a variety of classes, congregations and other venues. It was designed to be used in a variety of settings and this issue shares how one congregation used the material during a weekend retreat.

One exciting development is that we commissioned the translation of two books in the box into Spanish and French last winter: *Maskipiton: Peace Chief of the Cree* and *The Teachings of the Sacred Tree*. Most of the Spanish copies were taken to Paraguay and Argentina with us in July and distributed to the church leaders there. There was much interest in the books and also provided interesting discussion during the workshops at the larger Assembly. The French copies are available for distribution as well this fall.

May your journey and ours be one of building new relationships, equipping ourselves with a strong desire to learn more, and developing a passion for justice as we strive to “Walk Together in the Way of Jesus Christ”!

That is all we have for now. Migwetch.

Neill and Edith

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



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.

Intotemak staff

Editors – Edith & Neill von Gunten
nativeministry@mennonitechurch.ca

Editorial Assistant – Ingrid Miller
imiller@mennonitechurch.ca

Art Director/Designer –
Carpe Diem Communications,
Tammy Sawatzky

Printed by Christian Press

Please send all communications to:

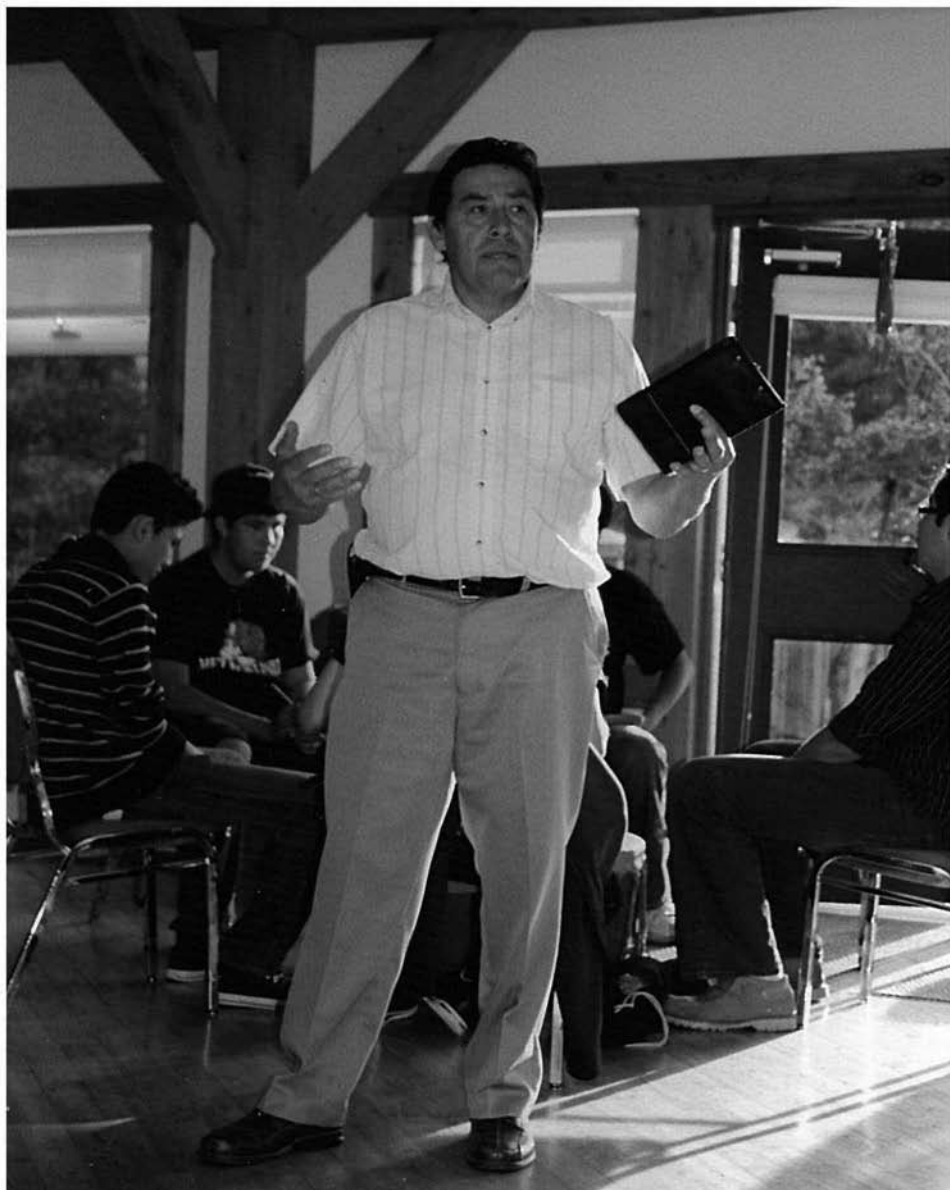
Intotemak
Mennonite Church Canada
c/o Native Ministry
600 Shaftesbury Blvd. Winnipeg, MB
R3P 0M4 204.888.6781
Toll Free 1.866.888.6785
Fax 204.831.5675
www.mennonitechurch.ca

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*COVER: Twenty young people were
baptized in a Paraguayan indig-
enous Mennonite congregation on
July 20, 2009.*

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.



Harry LaFond, (above) Executive Director of the Treaty Commissioner's Office in Saskatchewan, welcomed the Mennonite Church Canada delegates and guests to his Cree homeland at the opening session in Saskatoon. Here he is speaking to the participants of the Aboriginal Learning Tour that followed the Assembly.

Living Inside Out

I attended the Mennonite Church Canada Annual Assembly in Saskatoon in early June as a delegate from my congregation – the Riverton Fellowship Circle. The Assembly was a wonderful, uplifting spiritual event for me and meeting old friends and building new relationships was special to me.

I enjoyed attending the Minister's meeting the first day and the anointing service there was a real highlight. I also attended several special luncheons during those days and got a lot of information from the different groups sponsoring the luncheon.

The worship music at Assembly was awesome! The speakers were great and it was good to discuss issues and work together as a group around our assigned table. The Sunday morning closing worship service was just awesome and I was honoured to take part in serving communion there.

I am so thankful that I was able to attend the Assembly!

—Barb Daniels, Riverton, MB



Terry LeBlanc, NAIITS board member, interacting with one of the symposium participants.



Cheryl Bear Barnettson, NAIITS board member and new chair.

The Indigenous Church: Expressions of Community

The 6th NAIITS Symposium on Indigenous Theology and Mission was held June 4 – 6, 2009 at Trinity Western Seminary, Langley, British Columbia. The theme was “Indigenous Church: Expressions of Community.”

If the other non-Native folk who attended this year's NAIITS (the North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies) symposium were anything like me, they were anticipating a time of rich learning, great conversation and fun fellowship. And that's certainly what we received. But what we probably weren't anticipating was a homework assignment specifically tailored for us white attendees. Yet that's certainly what we got. No, there was no written project to be handed in, or work sheets to be filled out by a certain deadline. The homework was much more profound and difficult than that. Consider some of the things that the NAIITS speakers said, and you'll see what I'm talking about.

On the first day of the conference, Brian McLaren – a White American, and a leading voice within the “Emergent Church” – shared how Western Christianity is plagued with the problems of “white privilege” and

the “history and ideology of colonization” (phrases and ideas that surprised some of us because they were so “new” and possibly “threatening”).

Through gentle words and a soft-spoken style of communication, McLaren boldly asserted that white people in North American churches have to start re-thinking Christ's gospel and how they go about doing church. We've got to see, for example, that the “good news” is not about other-worldly pie-in-the-sky, but God's peaceful rule in this world through a *tribal man* named Jesus – a tribal man who powerfully resisted a “*dominant white Roman culture*” by living with the marginalized and dying for the oppressed. We've got to see, moreover, that the church is intended to be that place where all the nations, tribes and tongues, are brought together by the Spirit and radically share their gifts and riches with one another in mutual ways. And how will we see such things? One way, said

McLaren, is for white people to intentionally “unmask” the dominating ways of their past and current culture. For McLaren, that process of “seeing and unmasking” has begun through building friendships with people of colour, listening to and engaging their stories, and reading Christian theology written specifically by non-whites and women.

On day two, Richard Twiss (member of the Rosebud Lakota/ Souix tribe and a Christian author) stepped up to the lectern, and with humor and frank speech (what he refers to as “the no bullshit zone!”), issued another powerful call to do some “homework.” The call was sometimes implicit, as when, for example, Twiss said, “We Indians have got to rescue theology from the cowboys.” Embedded in that statement are some difficult truths – that white Christianity has a monopoly on theology and tries to define what “true” Christianity is; that white Christianity has prevented or discouraged Native communities



Youth panel at the NAIITS symposium

from doing indigenous theology. For those with ears to hear, the assignment was obvious: We white Christians – teachers, pastors, laypeople, whomever – have got to subvert this oppressive monopoly. *So how will we practically go about doing that?*

At other times, Twiss issued calls that were more explicit: “White Church hasn’t had the privilege of experiencing God as Native. It’s about time they did!” In other words, the North American church has got to open its’ door to Aboriginal Christians in radically egalitarian ways, something it has never done.

Perhaps, the most moving summons for us white people to do “discipleship/homework” came from a First Nations youth from Saskatchewan. During a roundtable discussion, she was asked, “How would you go about making changes in the church [to make it more of a *home* for First Nations peoples?]” Her answer was clear and to the point. “The *first step* for the church would be to teach the *bad history*. Learning, admitting and educating the people is vital. For any kind of unity to happen, the church has to teach the *real history*.”

It was next to impossible to avoid the call that the Native leadership at NAIITS were offering up. This young Native woman, Richard Twiss, Brian McLaren and all the other speakers graciously trumpeted it over and over again, and in various ways. They were asking me and every other white person attending the symposium to do some serious homework.

How would we respond?

Would we extend effort to become aware of white privilege, racism and colonization?

Would we learn the history of Native peoples and teach our white neighbors such?

Would we take another look at the Gospel and have the courage to read it through Native and marginalized eyes?

This task is not an easy one. And it certainly wasn’t easy for the presenters to call us to it. At times you could feel a thick tension in the lecture hall when words like “colonialism” and “white privilege” were used. And if some of us white folk found this uncomfortable at times – us folks who, for the most part, are intimately relating with Native peoples – imagine how many of our white Christian friends and churches who have little or no relationship with Native persons would have responded? To be honest, I think many of them would have walked out.

Why is it so hard for us white people to hear this kind of talk and to receive this kind of summons? No doubt there’s a whole host of reasons, maybe a “Legion” of them (cf. Mark 5). But perhaps pride is the big one.

The other day, fifteen friends from my church community went out to our neighbour reserve (Tachet) to share a meal with them and watch a wonderful documentary about reconciliation called *Two Rivers*. At one point in the movie, a white woman looks the camera straight in the eye and says something like this: “If we were going to be able to really hear our native neighbors . . . really hear them . . . we had to begin by acknowledging that we white people are basically arrogant.” Period. That’s what she said. We white people are arrogant. And when she said it, her words struck my heart hard. It had the ring of truth. But then I started to sweat, anxious as to how the white people in my church were going to respond to that shocking statement. I thought some would walk out. Yet they surprised me. They didn’t

walk. They continued to listen. Perhaps there was a subtle understanding that she was right. *We are arrogant. We don’t want to learn. We believe we know it all. We know the problems and the answers.*

How do we overcome this arrogance and so arrive at a place where we can have hearts willing to learn and do “homework”?

Could this be a first step? This morning I read that old prayer from St. Francis of Assisi, in which he prays, God “grant that I may not seek to be *understood*, as to *UNDERSTAND*; to be *loved*, as to *LOVE*.” The posture of this prayer is remarkable, and so utterly gospel. It’s the posture of Jesus on his knees, seeking to wash his neighbours’ feet, rather than his own (cf. John 13).

And thus I think to myself – my very white self – if my First Nations sisters and brothers are saying that I can love them by listening to their stories and exploring their history (and cannot love them unless I do such), *why on earth would I not do it?* If it will bring some measure of *UNDERSTANDING* (and I pray also justice, reconciliation and hope), then bring on those books exploring Native theology and white privilege (or whatever)! Help me, God, and help all of us white Christians in Canada and the United States to do the homework! This is our gospel duty and joy. And who knows? Perhaps in doing such work we will not only get to know and love and understand our Native neighbors more, but we will also realize that we don’t know everything, that there’s lots for “us” to learn, lots to repent of, lots of good stuff to do . . . and in that place, we will know, love, and understand our new selves more. May it be so.

—Steve Heinrichs, *Granisle, BC*

More from NAIITS...

Reflecting on the history of NAIITS, the chair, Terry LeBlanc, said that “The journey to this place of First Nations driven biblical and theological education, of writing and serious discussion on the things of God, has been a long one. But this is now our 9th year, our 6th symposium on Indigenous theology and mission.”

The format is a user-friendly one, in which First Peoples and others who connect with or work with First Peoples, share biblical and theological perspectives from the Scriptures from an Indigenous world view. Presentations are followed by small group discussion on what we heard. Reactions, responses, critiques are noted, then summarized to the whole group. It's a process that gives participants opportunity to chew on and digest new thoughts and challenges to conventional ways of thinking about God and God's mission. Specifically, in this conference, we examined what could or should the Indigenous church look like in light of Scriptural teachings from an Indigenous vantage point. This year's program “Indigenous Church: Expressions of Community”, engendered much thoughtful discussion during the breakout groups following each presentation.

A brief summary of the presenters and their focus:

Adrian Jacobs -- “Church of the Sacred Clowns.” In his passionate presentation, Adrian calls for the establishment of “The Church of the Sacred Clowns” (from a Pueblo tradition), a church that would exude vulnerability, brokenness, humility, a humanizing focus that models the characteristics of biblical messengers from God. In this church pretence is unwelcome; honest struggle happens instead. “All human experience is here in the context of God's engagement with us. He is not afraid of anything human. He is alive and living with those who are alive with Him,” says Jacobs.

Richard Twiss -- “Community Building in a Multi-Cultural World.” “Historically in the church, I'm always the mission field (i.e., First Nations people). The concept of Missio Dei opened up things for me. It's God's Mission that counts. And we all are part of His mission.” Richard

Figuring out who I was as a Native person made the vertical relationship with Creator much deeper.

sees a major paradigm shift in the church today, “from the paternalism of the past to a genuine Native-led ‘contextualization of the Gospel Story.’”

Roger Boyer -- “The Teens from Morley, Alberta.” Roger interviewed a good number of Morley First Nations young people about their perspective of who they are as Native people, put on earth by the Creator. “Figuring out who I was as a Native person made the vertical relationship with Creator much deeper,” said one youth.

Jeanine Lowe LeBlanc -- “Indigenous Hospitality: Learning from Cultures that Welcome.” Focusing on welcoming and hospitality which the church and individual believers are encouraged to do in the Scriptures, Jeanine provided beautiful examples of hospitality, central to the early church, from far-flung Indigenous communities. The Maori of New Zealand practice a “stranger-welcoming ceremony”, demonstrating hospitable intentions towards visitors. In so doing they build “a safe place to develop and continue relationships within creation.”

Youth Panel -- “iEmergence.” Young people discussed a multi-country study (Canada, USA, Philippines and New Zealand) on Indigenous young peoples' attitudes towards the church (positive and negative), what they would change, how they see culture and identity intrinsically woven with faith. What a breath of very fresh air hearing and seeing Native Christian young people envisioning a vibrant, relevant community of faith, not so concerned with mortar and brick, entertainment and consumer/success mentality. Rather they see this community as alive with humility, brokenness, family-like

acceptance, a full-time life style of practicing the unconditional love seen in Jesus.

Brian McLaren/Terry LeBlanc -- “Emergent Church/Indigenous Church.” Brian is author of the book *Everything Must Change*, among others. Terry posed tough questions to Brian on his perspectives of the history of the church, its effect on the world and on Indigenous peoples out of his wide diversity of “church” and international experiences. “What I thought was Christianity” Brian notes, “was a western cultural version of it. If only we could admit that we may have seen it all wrong! That ‘Thy Kingdom come’ is not just when we get to heaven but that God's Kingdom is to come down here on earth.”

Tom and Christine Sine with Eliacin Rosario Cruz -- “The Jesus Way in the Shadow of the Global Mall.” The new global economy marketers use sophisticated means as they mould our imaginations, “persuading people all over the planet to make their home in the global mall and to buy into their notions of what constitutes the good life and better future.” (That's the new colonialism.)

We in North America have already settled for a Eurocentric syncretistic approach to Christian faith, with a very troubled history. And now with the church in major decline denominations of all kinds are, in fact, looking to the young people to bring creativity and new life to the message of Jesus. (authors of *The New Conspirators: Creating the Future One Mustard Seed at a Time*)

*Tim Stime, Evansburg, AB
Taken from Indigenews, My People International, Summer 2009.*

Aboriginal Learning Tour in the Saskatchewan River Valley

The Aboriginal Learning Tour was held immediately following the Mennonite Church Canada Assembly sessions in Saskatoon. The Ministries Commission of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan and Leonard Doell, Aboriginal Neighbours staff person with Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan, worked closely with the Native Ministry office to make this tour possible. Thank you!

After Apologies

Although the government has officially recognized some of the injustices done to Aboriginal people over the years, particularly the painful residential school system, apologies will mean nothing if steps are not undertaken toward healing.

The government has a role to play in this process but according to teacher and author Maria Campbell (*Halfbreed*, University of Nebraska, 1982), the responsibility for transformation belongs to people. "Change doesn't come from politicians. It comes from communities," she said.

Campbell was one of several community leaders who addressed 21 members of the Mennonite Church Canada Native Ministry's Learning Tour, which took place in the

Saskatchewan River valley, just north of Saskatoon from June 7-9, following Assembly 2009.

"Our hope was for people from MC Canada congregations to hear the stories of a number of Aboriginal people and to feel their gracious and sharing spirit," said Edith von Gunten who co-directs Native Ministry with her husband, Neill. "There are so many myths being perpetuated through the mass media that need to be broken down . . ."

Campbell hosted members of the Learning Tour in the warmth of her kitchen. She was generous with her time and her approach. Despite some of the hard things she had to say, she assured us that inflicting guilt was not her intention. Our understanding of circumstances and events was more important.

"Mennonites came to Canada because terrible things were happening in Russia. But terrible things were happening here too," she offered gently. "In Manitoba, Métis people left [temporarily] to hunt for buffalo, and the government sent Mennonites into their empty homes."



Learning Tour participants, from left to right. Back row: Gordon Nesdoly, Leonard Doell, Dan Jack, Egon Enns, Steve Plenert, Aaron Epp, Alf Redekopp. Middle row: Ben Pauls, Eric Olfert, Arthur Wiens, Ben Wert, Rita Macdonald, Janet Plenert, Neill von Gunten. Front row: Deborah Froese, Jim Shantz, Sharon Janzen Nichols, Erna Enns, Leila Kornelsen, Edith von Gunten, Barb Daniels. — Photo provided by Mennonite Church Canada Native Ministry.

That was just one example of the many ways that Canada has made life difficult for Aboriginal people, despite negotiated treaties.

Harry LaFond, Executive Director of the Office of the Treaty Commissioner in Saskatchewan, addressed the common assumption, or myth, that First Nations agreed to the form of social support system that exists today. The oral tradition of passing down stories from generation to generation reveals another perspective, he said.

When First Nations realized their traditional way of life was dying along with the buffalo, they chose to negotiate for a means of transitioning that would give them other ways to survive and allow them to maintain

their dignity while also accommodating their new European neighbours. First Nations did not ask to be taken care of, but to be allowed the capacity to "make their own way" in changing times and to have access to appropriate healthcare.

The government agreed to provide agricultural advisors, equipment, livestock and seed to help First Nations improve their methods of farming. But the government was not faithful to the agreement's intent. They provided old or broken machinery and poor quality cattle. Eventually, they introduced legislation ensuring the farming success of European immigrants but preventing Aboriginal people from selling goods other than



Tour participants gather around the fire at Stony Knoll.



Maria Campbell, Métis elder and author.

firewood (no grain, cattle, milk, etc.) outside of their reserves. Aboriginal people were forbidden to hold traditional ceremonies and eventually even to fight for justice.

“Don’t support First Nations with hand-outs,” Campbell said, suggesting instead an exchange of service based upon relationship. “When people stopped helping each other, connections began to fail, resulting in broken relationships. Relationships and communities are not strengthened when there is a relationship of dependency.”

All of these insights impacted Pastor Steve Plenert, husband of Janet Plenert, MC Canada Executive Secretary, Witness, who was part of the Learning Tour. Upon his return to Winnipeg, he addressed Springstein Mennonite Church with a sermon about his experience. [see his comments below]

“In our case what might be the things that get forgotten in the relationship between white people and aboriginal or Métis people? We tend to forget that the First Nations people are called that because they actually were here first We forget that treaties have been signed between the government and the indigenous people . . . I am a treaty person.”

Healing requires transformation and transformation is not a simple process. The web of challenges facing Aboriginal communities across the country is complex and may take years to untangle.

However, steps toward transformation have occurred within individual communities; for example, Stony Knoll. On August 22, 2006 in that small rural Saskatchewan clearing, a Memorandum of Understanding

was signed by representatives of the Young Chippewyan First Nation, Lutherans and Mennonites who had all, at various times, lived and worked on treaty land. (Some Mennonite and Lutheran people are still farming there today.) The document said land was a provision of the Great Creator, that all parties agreed to respect “the sacred nature of covenants” including treaties, and would work together for “peace, justice and sufficiency for all our communities.”

The Memorandum came into being partly because of the work of Garry LaPlante, a First Nations leader of Young Chippewyan heritage, who recognized that Lutherans and Mennonites in the area had invested their lives in treaty land just as his people had done. He began drawing neighbours together by knocking on doors and sharing his appreciation for the care and respect with which they treated the land.

While those involved with Stony Knoll admit that achieving “peace, justice and sufficiency,” means there is much work ahead, they see the significance and potential of the Memorandum. The process has already begun by building relationships. And where relationships are supported and encouraged, change of any kind becomes more viable.

—*Deborah Froese, Winnipeg, MB*
Based on an article originally written for Mennonite Church Canada and adapted for use in The Community Well, the newsletter of First Mennonite Church of Winnipeg.

Tour participants reflect...

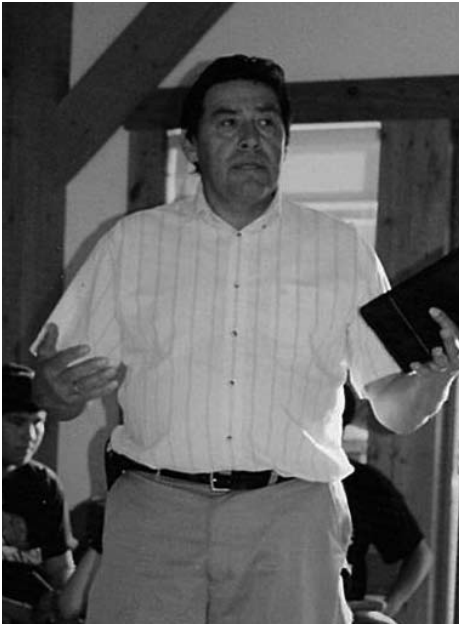
We were privileged to go to the Stobart High School in Duck Lake, where we were greeted by Howard Cameron and a group of youth called “Act Now.” The youth took us on a tour of the local museum to watch a video and look at different items before we went back to the school to share lunch and have a time of sharing and fellowship. Bless this youth group as they work to bring peace and an atmosphere of working together in their school.

Many thanks and blessings to all the people who were involved in getting this tour together. It has been a real blessing for me!

Barb Daniels, Riverton, MB

Already on the first day I (and I think we) felt welcome by our hosts, but aware of differences; comfortable, but not quite at home; safe, but challenged. The visit to the park/museum at Batoche further introduced us to a different story, to a different people, a different but compelling perspective. I loved the engaged passion of the guide, particularly at the Batoche church. She was not just providing facts, but the vision and perspective of a people, her Métis people.

The student dance/drumming group that came to Camp Shekinah from the nearby Beardy’s First Nation in the evening took us further onto unfamiliar and different terrain. The passion, energy and excellence of the young dancers, and singer-drummers took us deep into First Nations culture, through a feast of the senses. Swirling beauty, and the beat of the drum against my chest are



Harry LaFond speaks to the tour participants at Camp Shekinah.

overwhelming impressions. The experience became even more powerful when a group of about twenty elementary exchange students from Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario, who had been doing a short retreat at Shekinah, joined us, adding fresh and open spirits to the evening.

In the morning we moved on to Fort Carlton, for Allan Friesen's very well-done introduction to the history and activities of this place where two worlds intersected. When he was finished we were left with a sense of what it might have been like to be present as the outside world sorted out its relationships to the various First Nations people.

From there on to Stoney Knoll, for a meeting with leaders of Mennonite and Lutheran 'settlers' and representatives of the Young Chippewyan Band, who had originally been given this land as their reserve under Treaty Six. As each of the three groups talked it became clear that their three stories had crossed in a very powerful way in August 2006, when a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by representatives of the three groups. Not only had the three stories crossed, but were now 'buttoned together' at that point.

Eric Olfert, Saskatoon, SK

Shoulder-to-shoulder, twenty-one of us formed a circle in Maria Campbell's kitchen. The circle, we were told earlier, symbolizes the equality the Great Creator intends between all people. In a circle, there is no room for hierarchy. Campbell, a teacher, author and passionate advocate for margin-



Museum at Duck Lake, Saskatchewan.

alized people, particularly Métis and First Nations, had invited us to her home and kitchen.

The tour was intended to introduce us to our Aboriginal brothers and sisters, their history and their hope for the future. As Campbell shared tea with us, she began to tell stories about her people, the Métis, and the changes they have endured over the years. The Métis, like many other Aboriginal people in Canada, are tangled in the knots of a derailed transition that began generations ago. What Campbell and others had to say during the tour left an indelible impression and new understandings on all who were present.

Deborah Froese, Winnipeg, MB

Erna and I were looking forward to the tour, and what we experienced was far beyond what we had hoped for – and our hopes were high to start with!

Monday morning we were wonderfully hosted by staff and the student-run ACTNOW antiracism group at the Stobart High School at Duck Lake. It was amazing to see how they worked together from their different backgrounds as First Nations, Metis and non-Aboriginal young people, and how they were bringing their program across Saskatchewan and as far as Vancouver and Winnipeg. What an example!

Then to hear the story of the Batoche National Park. The presentation was different from the one we heard there several years ago. What is the true story? It started

to make more sense (or less sense??) how Metis people I've known grew up on road allowances because they lost the rights to their land base. It also took on new meaning to hear that it was the people who had lost their land base in Manitoba who had resettled in this land that no one wanted and were living peacefully with their own government until they were again pushed off. It sounds to me that the rebellion may have been more a resistance by the local settlers, Metis and First Nations inhabitants to the way Ottawa was redistributing the land. It was interesting to listen to the way the guide was now telling the story and allowing for transition in our understanding to take place.

Tuesday morning we were off to Fort Carlton. Alan Friesen, a man with many hats, including farmer, teacher and pastor at nearby Eigenheim Mennonite Church, was our capable guide. Among other things he gave me a new understanding of how the Hudson's Bay Company had some good managers who worked with the local people as well as the traders and people with supplies coming through. This fort was well-known for supplying buffalo and other meat to the travellers, as well as furs, and was in operation for many years. He gave me a different perspective of the Hudson's Bay from my experiences in northern Manitoba. Our guide shared how the guns being traded in the south were superior to the guns traded by the Hudson's Bay, which was one of the reasons that the southern armies were more successful. Another story I remember is how the young manager of the Fort held his sol-



Shekinah Retreat Centre, located 50 minutes north of Saskatoon on the North Saskatchewan River. (Left) Memorandum of Understanding signed by representatives of the Young Chippewyan First Nation, Lutherans and Mennonites who had all, at various times, lived and worked on treaty land.

diers back when a Blackfoot war party came to attack, and thereby avoided bloodshed. Much food for thought.

Possibly for me the greatest highlight was our noon meeting and lunch at Stoney Knoll. I understand in 2006 there was an historic meeting here with the descendants of the Aboriginal people who had lived here before the Mennonites came, and to whom this hill was holy ground.

After we had visited and eaten together, Garry LaPlante, a Young Chippewyan leader, shared what he had said in 2006. He thanked the local people for taking such good care of the Creator's land. This was the land that they had lived on for many years before the government took it and made it into reserve land for the Mennonite settlers. I was able to visit with Abe Funk, who at age 93 was there. He related some of his experiences working with the Aboriginal people and the good relationships that had been formed. He reminded me of my father and his relationships with the Sioux in our home community.

It was a very moving experience, and I am looking forward to the time when the many stereotypes and the misinformation and biases will be replaced with new understanding and strong relationships between fellow brothers and sisters in God's creation. We already have many good examples that need to be shared. I was blessed and encouraged, and very thankful to those who made this tour possible.

Egon Enns, Winnipeg, MB

Near the beginning of the book of Exodus (1:8-14), it talks about how a new king came to power in Egypt. He didn't know or remember Joseph or the important things he had done or the contributions he had made to help save Egypt during the years of famine. And so began a brutal oppression of the Hebrew people that lasted for many, many years until their liberation through Moses. Whenever there is the presence of a dominating, conquering culture (in the case of Canada that would be white people) and a less powerful, conquered culture, there is the tendency and the temptation to "forget Joseph" just the way that Pharaoh did. In the case of Pharaoh the invitation to live in Egypt was forgotten. The value of previous contributions was forgotten. And so on.

In our case what might be the things that get forgotten in the relationship between white people and First Nations or Metis people? We tend to forget that the First Nations people are called that because they actually were here first. God gifted them with this land long before European explorers came looking for China or whatever they were seeking.

We forget that, for the most part, the initial white settlers were given a welcome and hospitality. The perspective was that there was a lot of land so there would be room for more people. I don't think that the native people had any idea as to how many of us would be coming or how much disrupt-

Memorandum of Understanding

DECLARATION OF HARMONY AND JUSTICE
AUGUST 22, 2006
STONEY KNOLL, SASKATCHEWAN

We the descendants of
The Young Chippewyan First Nation who chose this land as a reservation upon signing Treaty 6 on August 24, 1876
and
The Mennonite and Lutheran settlers who built their communities here following the opening up of this land for settlement in 1897,

Hereby acknowledge the following mutual understanding and desires:

1. We are deeply grateful for the goodness of the Creator and the blessings which gave us this land and which give and sustain all our lives.
2. We respect the sacred nature of covenants, which order our relationships and bring harmony to our communities and nations, including Treaty 6 which was entered into on our behalf, for the purpose of mutual benefit and maintaining our livelihood.
3. We wish for ourselves and for future generations to live in conditions of peace, justice and sufficiency for all our communities. We will work together to help bring about these conditions through a timely and respectful resolution of the issues which history has left to us.

Ben Weenie
Chief Ben Weenie, Young Chippewyan First Nation

Abram J. Funk
Abram J. Funk, Mennonite Representative

[Signature]
Lutheran Representative

tion we would bring to their lifestyle or the welcome wouldn't have been so ready.

We forget that treaties have been signed between the government and the indigenous people. Do we know what is in those documents? I realized recently that I don't actually know and that I should. I am a treaty person. The treaties are for all the people of Canada. It may be my political representatives that need to carry out the promises made in them, but I am responsible for them just as much as any First Nations person is.

We forget that a lot of treaty promises and other kinds of promises were broken. There is quite a bit of talk about "land claims" in recent years. Some of them have been settled. Most have not. To many of us these land claims may appear like unreasonable land grabs. To those who have lost so much, you may be sure that it is seen quite differently.

We forget how integrally the First Nations and Metis people have been connected to the land, the cycles of nature and the earth. My own culture with its insatiable emphasis on consumption doesn't have nearly the same connectedness with "mother earth" even if we are farmers. As we come to see the degradation of the planet through over-consumption, through de-forestation and through the waste of resources, the less-



The Skyboy Singers and Sunrise Dancers who performed at our evening gathering at Camp Shekinah.



Participants heard the meaning of sage, sweetgrass, cedar and tobacco from a Cree elder.

heavy footprints of aboriginal peoples on the earth is making more and more sense.

Steve Plenert, Winnipeg, MB

When I returned to the Saskatchewan Valley, almost two years ago, after living away for 40 years, I was very aware that I was moving into First Nations territory, although Rosthern itself was never designated as reserve land.

Growing up (about 30 kms north of Rosthern, in the Mennonite farming community of Tiefengrund), I did not realize (no one knew) that our original family farm was on Treaty Six lands. And our family continued to own some of that land, even when a 5-mile move took our actual farmstead onto non-reservation lands.

I heard things about that at the time of the 100th anniversary of Treaty Six in 1976, but it did not feel personally relevant, and I admit I paid little attention to the controversies that ensued, nor to the process of healing and reconciliation that evolved over the next 30 years.

My move to Rosthern has felt very much Spirit-led. I am conscious of committing more deeply to living responsibly, in harmony with the earth, and peoples of the earth. I experience the gifts, and the responsibilities, of grace, daily...it is an ongoing process. And, again reinforced for me through this Tour, responsible living – creation care – cannot refer “only” to being as green as possible, to sustainable living, etc. It also includes how we live *with* our neighbors, locally and globally. I think I/we lose that holistic perspective at times;

all parts of creation are included in what we are called to “serve and protect” (words I much prefer as the translation for what is mandated in Genesis 2, and often translated as “till and keep”).

I have been very conscious that my neighbors in Rosthern include First Nations and Metis peoples (and I was not making even that distinction in any conscious way before this Learning Tour). I have wondered what it means to live responsibly in this community. I have become more and more aware of my ignorance, of my need to become educated. During our Orientation session on Sunday night, it was said several times, by several of our leaders...“we walk parallel with our neighbors – us and them; how do we walk *with* our neighbors?” That resonated deeply within me, articulated more clearly than I had been able my reason for joining this Tour. It is, a question that has persisted within me, sometimes more strongly than at other times, since I moved to this area. When I read of the Aboriginal Learning Tour, it felt like a gift of Spirit.

What was the biggest thing that struck me during the learning tour? *I need to listen. Everyone has a story. I need to listen. With respect.* Without preconceived notions. With an open heart and mind. In hearing the stories, I honor the persons. The unique history of this person, this Band, this culture. It is a vital part of the ongoing process of healing and reconciliation. It is a part in which I can participate.

My learning informs my listening – allows me to listen more deeply, to respect at

a deeper level what is being said, to reflect back to the person that I am really listening and wanting to learn, to listen in a manner that allows the other to feel listened to!

I was struck by the gentle persistent urgency during the Orientation Session by all of our leaders to be certain that all our interactions were respectful – and the clarity with which “respectful listening” was defined was very helpful, I thought – to listen without interruptions, without challenging perspectives, to ask questions if and when it was appropriate and to remain mindful in what we were asking and how we were saying that. I believe that built a wonderful foundation for us to be as sensitive and respectful as we knew how to be on this tour. I need to know more to be a true neighbour, to engage in ongoing genuinely respectful, invitational, listening ways.

To be respected is to feel listened to, understood, accepted as unique and distinct, and yet also as part of one family. We are all different and the same. That has been reinforced very deeply for me through this tour.

I need to be willing to get involved. I need to make my small voice join in the call to accountability, when the time for collective action is indicated.

The Aboriginal Learning Tour was a teacher for me, in what was planned, what we heard, what we experienced, in the opportunity to bear witness to the relationships that have been built over the years, and are never, even for one moment, taken for granted...Thank you.

Rita MacDonald, Rosthern, SK

In the Spirit of the Indigenous Heart



Meeting our Brothers and Sisters in Central and South America

As our group of nine Canadians gathered at the James Armstrong Richardson International Airport in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in the early morning hours of Sunday, July 12, 2009, we were excited, apprehensive and quick to admit that we were on an adventure unlike any other any of us had ever taken before. The trip that we had worked so hard on for so long was now coming to pass! We were on our way to the Mennonite World Conference Assembly Gathered sessions

in Asuncion, Paraguay – the first stop on our trip to South America to meet our indigenous brothers and sisters from South America who had invited us to visit their homes, churches and communities after the Assembly. Nicole Lea, the tenth member of our group, had left already on Wednesday to attend the Global Youth Summit sessions -- along with hundreds of other young adults from across the globe, including Keshia Littlebear of Montana – and Nicole and Keshia would also join our group upon our arrival.

As we travelled to our destination, our Canadian group met the fifteen Northern Cheyenne people from Montana in the Minneapolis airport. Wearing our common black tour T-shirts helped us find each other more quickly in the maze of travellers. The next stop was the Miami airport, where we met the rest of the North American group – three Southern Cheyenne from Oklahoma – which completed our group of twenty-eight. We then flew the rest of the way (Miami to Buenos Aires and then on to Asuncion) together.

The learning tour part of our trip began immediately following the Sunday morning worship service at the Mennonite World Conference Assembly Gathered. In addition to Patricia Burdette of Mennonite Women USA and our North American group, there were ten indigenous Mennonites from Guatemala, Panama and Peru on our bus to Yalve Sanga, as well as mission staff members Galen Groff (Guatemala), Byrdalene and Willis Horst (Argentina), César Moya (Ecuador), and Linda Shelly (USA), all excellent translators in both

Spanish and English. Janet Plenert of Mennonite Church Canada Witness joined us later that night, and several other indigenous people from Latin America were with us for the first day.

Thank you to those who helped to financially make this trip possible: Canadian Women in Mission, Manitoba Women in Mission, Bethel Mennonite Church (Winnipeg) Women in Mission, the Stella Devenpeck Fund and numerous individuals.

We will divide our reporting of the trip into five sections and include some of the comments made by the tour participants and leaders: Global Youth Summit, Mennonite World Conference Assembly Gathered, learning tour to the Chaco of Paraguay immediately following the Assembly, the learning tour to Argentina that completed our trip, and general comments about the impact this tour had on the participants' lives.

Global Youth Summit

I had a blast at the Global Youth Summit in Asuncion July 10-12, 2009. I travelled to Paraguay with Keshia Littlebear from Montana and we instantly connected with each other on our flight south. This was my first time flying alone and being so far away from home so it was a little scary to think of. But, with Keshia, I felt safe and we often said “things will fall into place. God will guide our path.”

We were met by volunteers of the GYS when we arrived and they took us to a temporary place to stay for a few hours before getting on a bus to go to Guten-

**Assembly 15
in Asuncion, Paraguay
July 14 - 19, 2009**

**Registered people
6204**

**Paraguay: 3476
Latin America: 592
Africa: 180
Asia: 90
Europe: 370
North America: 1496**

Total: 6204



Part of the Manitoba group waiting to board the plane in Winnipeg -- (back, L-R) Dennis Sinclair, Florence Benson - Umpher-ville and Edith and Neill von Gunten. Front, Marilyn Sinclair, Thelma Meade, Marge Johnston and Sarah Meade. Missing are Norman Meade and Nicole Lea.



Mennonite World Conference venue in Asuncion, Paraguay.

Photos provided by Paraguay and Argentina Learning Tour participants.

berg College where we would be staying. We met a lot of other youth who would be attending the GYS while waiting at Emaus.

Gutenberg was divided into two campus sections. One side held a canteen, gym and classrooms that would be turned into the girls' dorms. Across the street were the guys' dorms, which also held an internet room.

Keshia and I were split up into different rooms. I was in #14; she was on the other side of the laundry stalls in #16. We barely saw each other throughout the GYS. Keshia's room held 9-10 girls and my room had 19. It was like coming home to Canada when you stepped into room #14 because 17 of us were from Canada; one was from the USA and the other one was from Brazil.

I met so many people from around the world. There were 34 countries represented at the GYS and more than 800 participants. Our days were split up into two sections, morning and evening worship times. Morning worship was led by one continent group and evening, by another continent. It was unique and interesting to witness and participate in many styles of worship. There were traditional songs in tribal languages and traditional instruments. I especially enjoyed the African worship; the music was so alive that you

could feel God around you.

In the afternoons we had time to share with others and have time to ourselves. We had football games and there was also an art room where I would often go to unwind.

On our last day Keshia and I had to figure out how to meet the rest of our group from Canada and the USA. We decided to take a taxi back to Emaus Retreat Centre. I still don't know how we found our way around but we managed to meet up with everyone and continue with our journey.

—Nicole Lea, Winnipeg, MB

Mennonite World Conference Assembly Gathered (Mennonita Congresso)

The Native Ministry office was asked to organize three afternoon workshop sessions during Assembly 15. The workshops were well attended with over one hundred people crowding into the room we were given. Our REACHING UP TO GOD OUR CREATOR resource box became the focal point of the first session and gave opportunity to discuss faith and culture in indigenous settings. The Cheyenne group from the United States also shared on Thursday. The other two workshops focused more on shar-

ing by indigenous peoples and churches throughout Latin America.

Our North American group was on the stage at the Thursday morning worship service to lead the "Prayer of Thanks" [as used and developed by the Riverton Fellowship Circle in Manitoba] on the Assembly floor. A video clip of this service -- and more information on the happenings during Assembly week -- can be found at www.mwc-cmm.org/



This was the first time in my life where I've been in a conference as huge as this, to be in a place where all races were praising the Lord at the same time. They talked about reconciliation amongst the many denominations, too. I felt the love in that building and was very moved to tears at times. No matter what colour or denomination you are, you felt a belonging.

—Marilyn Sinclair, Hollow Water First Nation, MB

The most meaningful thing to me during the Mennonite World conference was all the different languages. I learned that people all over the world worship God in their own special way and each of them



Norman Meade and Nicole Lea carry the Mennonite Church Canada Native Ministry banner into the opening session of the Mennonite World Conference.



Funeral for Kornelius Issak.

talks to Him different. This showed me no matter how different we are or where we live, Jesus is in everyone's heart. We all worship the same God. It doesn't matter if we're all different colors. He loves us just the way we are. And we are all special in our own way. I also learned that most of the songs that were sung in all different languages are also translated into our language (Cheyenne). I now know that there were a lot of young adults (like me!) at the conference and I think this will help me encourage my friends to keep going to church and to continue praying to Jesus.

Ronatta M. Horse, Ashland, Montana

Forgiveness Brings Reconciliation

Kornelius Isaak was born in 1928, in Karlowka, Memriker Ansiedlung, in Russia, to Jakob and Elisabeth Isaak. Along with his parents and two older brothers the family moved to Paraguay in 1930. Here Kornelius lived through the difficult pioneering years of the new settlement, living in a tent which gave them little protection from the harsh climate of the Chaco wilderness.

Kornelius' peers describe him as intelligent, daring and brave, a good friend who was known as a peacemaker. At the age of fourteen years he became a com-

mitted Christian; teaching Sunday School at age sixteen and at the young age of nineteen years his congregation elected him as one of their ministers, and later he was ordained at the Mennonite Church of Filadelfia.

After finishing high school, attending two years of Bible School and learning the language of the Chulupi, Kornelius and his wife Mary founded the new missions station near Neu Halbstadt in the colony Neuland, where they served as missionaries to the Chulupi Indians, until the time of Kornelius' death.

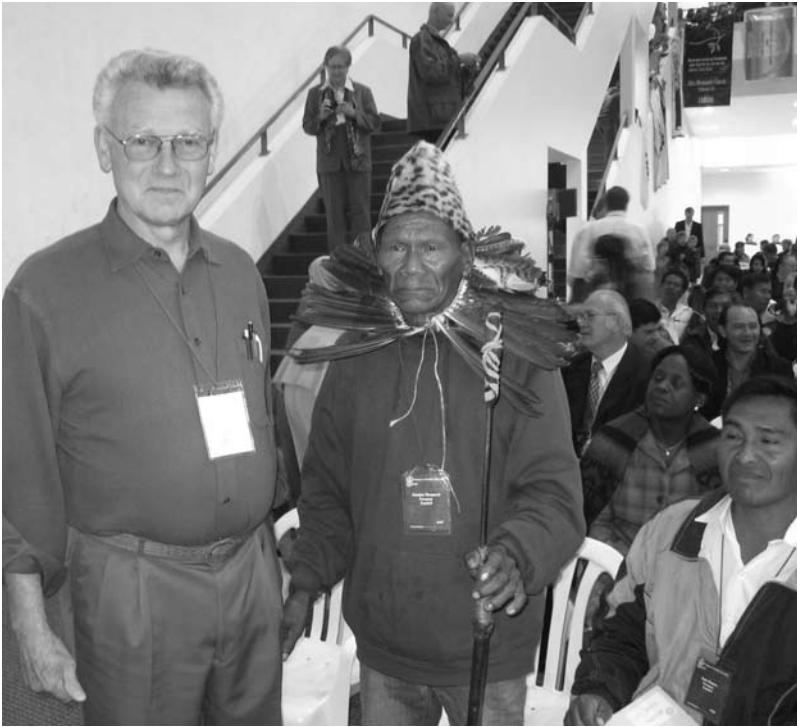
In 1958 the Pure Oil Company came to the Paraguayan Chaco to drill for oil and natural gas. With their heavy machinery they opened new roads and set up camp in the territory of the wild Ayoreos. The Ayoreos fiercely defended their territory with bow and arrows against the invasion of the white man, resulting in bloody confrontations.

The Mennonite Mission Committee, *Light for the Natives*, had been waiting for an opportunity to reach out to the Ayoreos, to bring them the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the time seemed to be right now. From the pilots of the Pure Oil Company, the location of the Ayoreos villages was known. It was also known that it was possible to reach them by jeep,

travelling the old roads which were used in the Chaco war.

When the call came: "Who is willing to go to the Ayoreos?" missionaries David Hein, a Lengua preacher and Kornelius Isaak responded. Kornelius' father, Elder Jakob Isaak, tried to hold Kornelius back, saying, "Kornelius, you cannot go; your life is at risk; you have a very important ministry with the Chulupi natives who need you desperately; you have a young family with three children and the fourth one on the way; Kornelius, you cannot go". Kornelius' response was, "Dad, do you not remember when you preached about Jesus' words: whoever loves father and mother, wife and children more than me is not worthy to be my Disciple? My Master is calling me, I have to go".

During the next weeks, the three men tried to establish contact with the Ayoreos. With their old jeep they drove into the wilderness of the Chaco, as far as possible. At a trail used by the Ayoreos to haul water from a nearby lagoon, the three men left gifts for the Ayoreos. At first, the Ayoreos took the gifts which were left for them but they did not leave gifts in return. Then one day when the three men returned, they found an empty wooden bowl and red-painted sticks in the ground beside the bowl. Later it



Helmut Isaak and Joinone meet for the first time at the Mennonite World Conference in 2009



Mary Isaak, wife of Kornelius, reconciles with Joinone of the Ayoreo tribe in the Paraguayan Chaco years ago.

became clear that the message of the bowl and red sticks was: we have nothing to give to you and if you return, blood will flow. When the missionaries continued to return, the Ayoreos began to leave their own gifts for the missionaries. The missionaries now felt that a first direct contact with the Ayoreos could happen at any time.

On the next trip to the location where exchange of gifts had taken place, the missionaries were suddenly surrounded by approximately 40 unarmed Ayoreos. The missionaries greeted them with: "We come as your friends; we come in peace" in the Ayoreo language. When they began to exchange gifts, the Ayoreos suddenly shouted their war cries. Then everything happens in a matter of seconds; the Ayoreos suddenly had weapons of spears and bow and arrows in their hands. One Ayoreo pointed his arrow at David Hein. Other Ayoreos tried to grab and hold the Lengua missionary. A young, strong Ayoreo warrior, who had been positioning himself behind Kornelius, threw his spear into Kornelius' back while Kornelius bent over into the jeep to retrieve more gifts.

The Lengua missionary was able to retrieve the shotgun out of the jeep and fire a warning shot into the air. With the

sound of the gunshot, the Ayoreos retreated into the surrounding bushes, watching the next move of the missionaries.

Kornelius pulled the spear out of his back, took the steering wheel of the jeep and drove a short distance until he collapsed. He was driven to the oil company camp where he received first aid and was immediately flown to the hospital in Filadelfia.

The news: "Kornelius Isaak has been seriously wounded and is in the hospital of Filadelfia", spread in a very short time through the Mennonite colonies of the Chaco. Immediately, prayers for the young missionary lifted up to the Heavenly Father.

At this time, the doctor of Filadelfia was holidaying in Germany and no trained surgeon was available to treat the wounded young man. Dr. Rakko was brought in from Neuland and he did what he could to stop the internal bleeding; after the surgery Dr. Rakko was certain that Kornelius would survive but his condition worsened by the hour. Later medical evidence showed that the spear tore the liver, spleen and kidney. Attempts by Kornelius' brothers to donate their blood failed because it became clear that the spear had been poisonous.

In the early morning hours of September 11, 1958, Kornelius Isaak died with a prayer for his family and for the Ayoreo who killed him.

Many years later Joinone (the young Ayoreo warrior who killed Kornelius) and his tribe accepted the gospel of Jesus Christ. A meeting of forgiveness and reconciliation with Kornelius' wife Mary and her children took place some time ago.

For Helmut Isaak, a younger brother of Kornelius, the meeting at the MWC was the first opportunity to meet Joinone, and to extend to him his hand of forgiveness. At the MWC Helmut took Joinone's hand and said, "Joinone, 50 years ago you were a fierce warrior and hero of your people. You did everything possible to defend your land and your people against the invasion of the white man. Then, 50 years ago, a young man with the name of Kornelius Isaak committed his life unconditionally to the war of the Lamb of God. His weapons were the love, grace, and peace of God. When the two of you met for the first time, Kornelius Isaak lost his life. Today, all of us here are brothers and sisters in Christ; we all fight the Holy war of the Lamb of God against sin, injustice and death".

Turning to the assembly, Helmut then



Paraguayan men preparing the meat for the noon meal at church following a worship service and time of sharing.



The Paraguayan harp, the accordion and guitars play an important role in the musical life of the Paraguayan indigenous Mennonite churches.

spoke the following words: "In the name of Joinone and Kornelius Isaak, I challenge the Mennonite World Conference to establish centers for training, research and study of the Biblical Anabaptist Theology of Peace. To avoid tragic encounters in the future, we all need to learn how to solve conflict and confrontation in a peaceful way".

Helmut further states, "Joinone is not a murderer; he defended his people and his land, just as our Canadian soldiers do today in Afghanistan. We do not call them murderers but heroes who are willing to risk their lives in defense of their homeland".

As a sign of forgiveness and reconciliation, Helmut gave Joinone his right hand; Joinone's sign of forgiveness and peace was handing over a spear to Helmut which was identical to the one that took Kornelius' life. Helmut has decided that this spear will be a symbol of peacemaking, and will be displayed at the Study Center for Anabaptist and Peace Theology at the Evangelical University of Paraguay (CEMTA).

—Helmut Isaak, Burns Lake, BC



The learning tour to the Chaco of Paraguay

The Native Mennonite-related congregations in Canada and the United States received a letter of invitation, dated 4 August 2007. It reads, in part:

"We, the presidents of the three Mennonite-related indigenous conferences in Paraguay, warmly welcome you into our homes. We have already discussed this possible visit within our churches. We are eager to introduce you to our families, our congregations and our way of life. We anticipate hearing about your walk with the Lord and also about traditions, your stories and your experiences within the Mennonite family of faith. We genuinely believe this interchange will be good for both of us. ... Your brothers and sisters in Christ from Paraguay,

Asiano Faust, Convencion de las Iglesias Evangelicas Unidas

Vicente Juarez, Convencion Iglesias Evangelicas Hermanos Menonitas Nivacle

Eligio Ferreira, Convencion Evangelica Menonita Lengua"

Thank you, brothers and sisters, from the North American group for the invitation and for hosting us so well!!!

Our indigenous group was based at a dormitory in Yalve Sanga from Sunday evening until Friday morning and each day we were honoured to visit, worship and enjoy the hospitality of the Nivacle and/or Enhlet congregations that arose out of mission work by the German-speaking Mennonites. [There are now 8000+ indigenous Mennonites in the Chaco area.] One day a smaller group visited with Ayoreo leaders in their community and another day was spent touring

in the colony centre town of Filadelfia. Our tour guides and translators were German-speaking Mennonite staff of ASCIM, the interethnic cooperative agency that works with the social, educational and economic aspects of life in the indigenous communities.



I observed that our people from the Chaco connected very quickly with the Latin indigenous people. They exchanged e-mail addresses and gifts (though not publicly). On the other hand, they found it difficult to believe that the North Americans were actually natives, probably because they had such pale skin coloring and spoke only English among themselves. But when one woman talked in the Cree language, they were more ready to believe this. Others said: "We never knew that there were Indians outside of the Chaco. We want to make an effort, collect money and visit these people in North America. We want to know how these people live."

I personally thought that the visit was a very positive and eye-opening encounter. Of course, it is unfortunate that we cannot quickly translate the background of many terms that our indigenous people used, thereby losing some of the meaning in the translation. An example from the above quote: "We never knew" more accurately means, "we never made the personal experience".



Paraguayan women's choir in one of the indigenous Mennonite churches we visited in the Chaco. The guests are seated on the stage.



Edith von Gunten (left) and Marge Johnston (right) eating lunch after the service with a Toba congregation in Argentina.

Each settlement that was visited by your tour group thanked me many times for bringing them there. A personal encounter with the visitors, to see them and hear them, is very important to the Chaco indigenous people when building relationships. We would like to continue to connect in the future.

We thank God for His protection of the group during their travels. May He continue to bless each one of us in our own specific circumstances. Christian greetings,

Jakob Lepp, Filadelfia, Paraguay

I felt a great sadness and also happiness for the people we visited in the Paraguayan Chaco. My culture is important to me and I think everyone should be proud of who they are but I thought they abandoned their culture so my feelings are mixed about their situation. I regret not being able to communicate with them directly.

—Marilyn Sinclair
Hollow Water First Nation, MB

The learning tour to Argentina

Members of the indigenous group from Canada, the United States, Panama and Peru travelled on to Formosa, Argentina to visit with the Argentine indigenous people from Friday evening until Monday morning. It was a very full weekend and we were based at a Catholic retreat centre. The Mennonite Mission Network staff there had invited 20+ Toba and Mocovi

people from a large region to join the gathering and share with the visitors. The translators were very busy and we were all extremely grateful for their commitment to ensuring the sharing on this tour went well.

It was fascinating to hear the stories being shared and to realize firsthand how similar the experiences are of indigenous peoples in North, Central and South America: how as students in school they were forbidden to use their native language, how their culture was scorned, and how land was stolen. Over and over again we heard “This isn’t enough time. We are just beginning to talk.”

It was obvious, also, that each group values their spirituality and who they are as a people, and that they were excited to have this opportunity to meet brothers and sisters in Christ who speak different languages and live in geographically different spaces. We felt much hope from each one and the sense that God is present and active everywhere!

Saturday evening we visited a local congregation and on Sunday we divided up into four groups in order to visit other rural congregations. One group, for example, travelled 160 km to the Bartolomé de las Casas community, with Willie Horst as their leader. A real treat there was sharing with a 96-100 year old man (There is a debate on his age!) under a large tree near their church building. Among other things he told us the

significance of that tree to his people and Nicole Lea from our group shared from the *Teachings of the Sacred Tree* booklet we produced as part of our REACHING UP TO GOD OUR CREATOR resource box. As we were about to leave, we received an official letter from the church to recognize the importance of our visit with them.

(Translation of letter of gratitude from pastor Martín Flores and his congregation (ethnic identity: Toba), given to group of international indigenous visitors on 26th July, 2009, at the church on the reservation “Bartolomé de las Casas”, written on letterhead of the Evangelical Pentecostal Church “Star of Hope”, dated 26 July, 2009, signed by church president Martín Flores, and with the official seal of the church.)

From the pastors, evangelists, and members of the above mentioned church.

It is with enthusiasm and appreciation that we welcome our indigenous brothers and sisters from the United States, Perú, Canadá, and Panamá. We receive you as blood brothers and in Christ Jesus.

We who live in this Formosan land feel strengthened, even supported, in this time of need due to the discrimination by the government of our country.

It is with our sincere thanks for the visit of our brothers and sisters, and we hope it will not be the only or last time. We are also especially thankful for our



Sharing from the elders was important to hear everywhere we went.



Children were a delightful presence at our gatherings in both countries.

brother Willi, who arranged this visit.

*We ask that you will never forget us.
We give thanks to God for this gathering,
for our sense of one brotherhood, and
that we are in the image of God.
Amen.*

What a huge difference when we visited Argentina. Those who came to meet with us were educated people who were allowed to share their culture and many other things. They didn't expect the other people (Mennonites) to do the talking for them. I felt a part of them. I could understand even though I couldn't understand their language, I felt so close to them. I'm very grateful to the Mennonites there because what I felt and saw was genuine, unconditional love for the First Nations, just like the ones we have in Manitoba.

Marilyn Sinclair, Hollow Water First Nation, MB



I think the most meaningful moment for me in Argentina was when I travelled to a community that had a tree they called "The Tree of Life". It resembled the Teaching of the Sacred Tree, the book that I worked on with Norman Meade. Norman was so excited to speak with the people about their beliefs on the teachings of the tree but he became ill and stayed behind.

I was able to speak for him and I was so honoured to meet the elders and share with them.

I also spoke about the story of Maskipiton and my involvement with the book and was shocked by the response that I received. In Formosa I was asked to be interviewed and filmed to speak to other young artists of Native blood about my own experiences as an artist.

Nicole Lea, Winnipeg, MB

Ashamed, but hopeful in Christ

Usually I take pride in being a Christian. I am profoundly moved by stories of God bringing about deep and complete transformation of people across the nations and throughout history. I am in awe of how God's people, the church, have been God's agent in so very many ways.

But occasionally, I hang my head in utter shame and even horror at what the church has done, and I plead with God to never again allow us, the church today, to make some of the world changing mistakes we have made in the past.

The Aboriginal Learning Tour following the Mennonite World Conference Assembly in Paraguay was such an experience. It was an incredibly unique, diverse and intergenerational group. Métis, Ojibway, Cheyenne, Cree, Shawnee, and Lakota from North America joined different tribal groups from Guatemala, Panama, and Peru.

This group – communicating bilingually in English and Spanish, was hosted by the Enlhet, Nivacle, and Guarani indigenous Mennonites in Paraguay, and Toba Qom and Mocoví Christians from Argentina.

As the conversations deepened between cultures, common themes emerged. This is where I found myself both impressed by the consistently gracious spirit of all the groups, and increasingly sickened by the role of the church in committing what some have come to call cultural genocide. The church has had a huge role, both as accomplice and as perpetrator, of the systematic degradation, devaluation, and near obliteration of indigenous cultures, traditions, and sense of peoplehood of Aboriginal peoples in all of the Americas.

It was clear that every single group represented, from each of the seven countries, continues to experience the effects of this attempted obliteration of their cultures. While not every group has experienced a residential school type policy, each actively struggles with their sense of peoplehood, of being the victims of broad sweeping repression, overt oppression, specific laws that marginalize them, as well as resulting current effects of all forms of abuse at the hands of colonizers, governments, and yes, the church.

In Canada, government funded, church run residential schools were a key strat-



Church gatherings were generally overflowing as people of all ages came to greet their guests.



Cooking for the meals is done outside at each location.

egy to, in the words of Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs (1923 – 1932), Duncan Campbell Scott. Scott began working in the civil service in 1879. Scott summed up over a century of past and future policy when in 1920 he advocated getting rid “of the Indian problem,” expanding that “Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian Question and no Indian Department.”

In all, 150,000 Aboriginal Canadian children were forcibly removed from their homes, families and communities and required to attend residential schools in order to educate them in English, instill ‘Christian’ values, and systematically remove their culture, values, traditions and languages from them. In effect, significant, sustained effort was made to force Aboriginal people to be less than they are as children created in the image of God. Yet as I sat with Aboriginal brothers and sisters, listening to their conversations, I was in awe at the hope they showed, and the grace and forgiveness they embodied. In spite of the church, here we were at a global church event. In spite of the degrading treatment and abuse administered at the hands of the church, we all joined hands to pray and sing praises to God. In spite of the fact that they are struggling to pass on their language and music, they welcomed and accepted us

as non-Aboriginal brothers and sisters in their midst.

In the closing session, several people stated that this encounter made them realize that they can be proud to be Metis, or Toba, or Quechua. One South American brother challenged the others to claim a healthy attitude in Christ, looking to Christ as our creator, accepting that we are made in the image of God and thus being proud and strong in Christ, rather than feeling poor, victimized, and without opportunity.

I hung my head in shame at what the church has done, and the pain it has inflicted. And then I raised my head, as if Christ himself were lifting my chin. And I looked into the eyes of my Peruvian Aboriginal brother. And as we ate a meal together, and shared bread, and he offered to fill my glass, I too felt the hope that I saw demonstrated in the participants of this tour. Lord, forgive us, for we know not what we do. May your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

*Janet Plenert, Mennonite Church
Canada Witness*



“I am really happy to be here,” said Danetta Fisher to the Toba congregation in Nainek, Argentina, “because I can see you guys are really serious about your faith.” Danetta, from the White River

Cheyenne Mennonite Church, Busby, Montana, was part of the North American Native tour group visiting in Argentina after the Mennonite World Conference in neighboring Paraguay.

Thirty some visitors, from Canada, USA, Panama and Peru, spent parts of four days interacting with indigenous believers and non-native fraternal workers from northern Argentina, part of the time in a retreat setting and part of the time in nearby native communities and churches. Most of the interactions had to be translated, between Spanish and English, so that participants could understand and be understood.

As a participating fraternal worker, I helped to interpret some of the interactions, both formal and informal. Perhaps what touched me most about this South-North Indigenous Encounter was the similar way in which many of the participants expressed themselves. Recalling the honest, earnest way in which Danetta spoke, and Thelma Meade and Joe Walks Along, I was touched by the similarities with expressions of, say, Sixto Lalecori and Emiliana Gonzáles, indigenous friends from our part of Argentina. They all shared their heartfelt gratitude for simply being present in this gathering. They gave greetings and promised to carry greetings to others. They spoke gently and plainly, in the repetitive way typical of traditionally oral peoples, without subtlety or irony.

I sometimes wonder if one of the



A 100-year-old Toba elder from Argentina and Nicole Lea, a Cree young adult from Manitoba, shared their respective teachings of the sacred tree. The pastor of the congregation is also in this picture.



Most of the Indigenous tour group poses in a German-speaking Mennonite congregation in Filadelfia, Paraguay.

gifts that native peoples have to offer this world's fast-moving, fast-talking, clever-witty, global market culture is an alternative way to communicate. That native peoples from both South and North America still preserve a similar style of speaking, though of course in different languages, suggests to me that this gift is somehow rooted in certain values common to these original peoples. Those values have to do, I think, with a tradition of openness, courtesy, vulnerability, and honesty. The "talking stick" tradition, described by Norman Meade, confirms some of these values.

We've also observed, in Toba contexts, the whole range of human sentiments and behaviors, the negative ones especially aggravated in recent decades by difficult living conditions in multi-tribal, urban barrios. Here, the more traditional tendencies, like patience, gentle humor, long-suffering and self-restraint are being undermined, especially by television and communication media. And yet these Biblical qualities seem to persist as indigenous values, as evidenced in the South-North Encounter.

While this short assembly of native peoples from North and South was not adequate to explore many of these dynamics, several themes emerged. Especially noteworthy were the common north-south disquiet over loss of native language and the profound pain over loss of native land. On the last night of the

gathering, Toba pastor Rafael Mansilla expressed his deep longing for the recovery of land on which his people might once again build a more self-sufficient life. As the session ended, Ronetta Horse from Montana sought Rafael out, and asked me to translate for her. She told this tall Toba cacique (chief) that she had heard similar concerns about land expressed by her grandparents in the United States, and she wanted Rafael to know that they had told her these injustices would someday be set right. With gentle courtesy, Rafael thanked Ronetta for her grandparents' counsel, now passed on to him by this earnest 16-year-old youth.

Keith Kingsley, Mennonite Mission Network fraternal worker, Formosa Argentina

Two participants in the Indigenous Gathering in Formosa, Argentina on July 24-27, 2009, shared their reflections on the event in a conversation with Gretchen and Keith Kingsley. Emiliana González is an auxiliary teacher in the public school of her community. Her husband Juan Aguirre is a church leader in the native United Evangelical Church.

Emiliana: What impressed me were the similarities we have with those who came from so far away. I never realized what happened in the United States and Canada, or Peru and Panama; I was so impacted when they told of their reality.

It made me think of all the persecution of the Qom people (Toba, Pilagá, Mocoví) in the Chaco of Argentina, in what is called the Conquest of the Desert (extermination of native peoples in the Chaco wilderness). What they write in books is not the reality because we have experienced it ourselves; we have living experiences.

When we were grade school students, we were forbidden to speak our own language; that was just 20 years ago. If they heard us talking our language, we were put in detention. That's also what I heard from the brothers and sisters who visited from the North. There is no difference. One of them, a Cheyenne woman, talked about working for a government commission, how they always put us in last place. It was impressive to hear these stories.

I also noted the importance of the tree symbol, how the explanation of a Toba pastor (Joel Jara) and the tree that the Canadians brought (*The Sacred Tree* booklet) were so similar. Apparently native peoples always reference a tree, something that has deep roots. The roots have significance, and also the trunk, the branches, and the fruit as well.

I was also impressed with the young people who came from the North. It's as if they are trying to revitalize or redeem something, trying to find their roots. And when we went home and told the young people in our house, they said, "Why weren't we invited?" They wanted to connect with them. I said that would be



Northern Cheyenne young people sing and share in their language.

difficult because of the language difference. But would there be a way for young people to correspond, maybe by email? (Of course it would require translation.)

Juan: What I gained from the gathering relates to the spiritual aspect. Our history causes us to see spiritually because it requires us to reflect on who we are. If we only focus on our natural present reality, we end up walking without direction, which is so common in our world. But to awaken spiritually leads us to who we really are, where we've come from, where we're going. Spiritual reality causes us to remember, to think about that which has happened to us and that which *can* happen in the present.

I heard a brother in the group from the North whose focus was distinctly spiritual. And then I heard a young person talk, and I took note about how he was expressing himself, his intellect, his way of seeing things, and that also expressed something spiritual. When he said, "My parents and I are different, we see things differently, because I'm young and they are old," he was differentiating himself. I asked, "How did he learn this?" I would say it's because we are awakening spiritually.

I remember one time when my uncle was visiting our house and he noted the algarrobo tree there (the sacred tree for the Qom), and he said to me, "When we were youth, our fathers gathered us together and, looking up with us, told us that their

fathers always looked for a tree of reference that stood taller than all the other trees when they went into the forest. And when they arrived at the tree of reference, the elders knelt with all those who accompanied them, old and young, and one of the elders said, "Good tree, we want to ask you for permission to enter the forest that you are guarding, and we want to ask you to give us nourishment, shade, and to protect us . . . all these things."

They understood that there was a spiritual power greater than the tree, but the tree was what they could see, and it was their point of reference. But they knew there was a being caring for them that they didn't see.

And when Jesus Christ appeared to our people, the Qom, then they said, "Ah, . . . there is someone beyond the tree! We are going to follow what we do not see." It has awakened us profoundly, to the depths of the soul.

When the gospel entered, many elders by faith began to follow what they could not see. But some never left . . . the protection of the tree, and continued to thank the tree. But when the tree of Jesus Christ came, I began to share not only with my family but with all the community. This gift of compassion came and loving one's neighbor has no limits."

Before the coming of Christ to us, to be the strongest hunter, the bravest warrior, was of great value . . . but when the love of God came to us we became equal,

from the weakest to the strongest.

My father said to me, "When you truly taste Christ in your life, then there is no longer discrimination. God who has called you has made you his son." This is the foundation of your identity, of knowing who you are.

This is the spiritual aspect that I have lived these days with our brothers and sisters, Original Peoples from other countries. Each people (i.e. group) has its own clans and identity. But we have similarities. The churches are the key in our communities and we have a Center which is Jesus.

This gathering not only awakened me but also keeps challenging me. We need to know ourselves better, that is, who we are. Many times I say, "Lord, where are we on the Way? Speak to me. I want to understand." And when he speaks I can say, "Now I understand; now I have this integrated into my life."

The Impact This Tour Made on My Life

The most meaningful thing to me was noticing how much water (or lack of) most of the tribes had. I now know how sacred water is to our people. The people treated us like royalty and, if I could, I would treat them the same at my house.

I have learned that the Native people over there have many things in common with the North American Natives. When they were praying the men had on outfits with yarn on the legs and shoulders. In Montana the men wear similar outfits. They're called the "Grass Dancers". Even the women had outfits like us and we call them "Traditional Dancers."

This trip showed me and my family that material things aren't really important. The thing that makes a difference in my life is (no not money!) but having family, friends and Jesus in my life.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity. I really appreciate every little thing everyone has done for me.

Ronatta M. Horse, Ashland, Montana

Visit
www.mennonitechurch.ca
 to learn more.



Aboriginal Theme at Church Retreat Meaningful and Fun

The Native Ministry resource box, REACHING UP TO GOD OUR CREATOR, was developed for a variety of uses within both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal settings. This article provides an example of how one Mennonite congregation recently used the box within their setting.

The Charleswood Mennonite Church congregation gathered to worship and enjoyed a fellowship meal on Sunday, May 31, 2009 but the sanctuary at 699 Haney Street in Winnipeg, Manitoba sat empty. It was the weekend of the annual church retreat, held at Camp Assiniboia. Participants reported that this time of learning, outdoor activities, worship, and community building was a meaningful and fun experience. The retreat drew 75 people on Saturday and over 140 on Sunday.

The theme for the weekend was taken from a Mennonite Church Canada resource collection titled "Reaching Up to God Our Creator," which explores the common ground between Aboriginal sacred teachings and the Bible. Developed by a team that included Elsie Rempel from our congregation, this material is intended as an introduction to Aboriginal wisdom traditions, through which we can learn to know Christ more fully and work at bridging the divide of church and culture that often separates non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal people in Canada.

The retreat began Saturday morning with registration and a mixer game of "people bingo" led by Laura Thiessen. Marlene Permanand then told the story of Maskipiton, a nineteenth-century Plains Cree chief who became a Christian and decided to work for

peace. Participants then divided into groups for discussion, which began with a sharing circle. People took turns sharing their impressions of the story using a talking stick, which permitted only the holder to speak. Several people remarked on how effectively this device empowered speakers and enhanced communication by emphasizing listening.

After lunch youth and adult participants chose to attend one of five sessions based on the theme. LeAnn Friesen introduced the story of the sacred tree, which describes the natural and spiritual gifts of God to all people, and directed her group in making a symbolic craft of fresh willow branches.

Laura Thiessen led a session that examined symbols of spirituality employed in Aboriginal and Christian art, and which included an opportunity to create a piece of artwork that drew on these traditions.

A session led by Sara Jane Friesen explored the seven sacred teachings common to many Aboriginal traditions. Sara Jane told animal stories that illustrated each teaching and encouraged discussion, emphasizing parallels to the fruits of the Spirit.

Rudy Friesen taught his group about the medicine wheel and looked at what it teaches about the importance of balance in life and our need for the guidance of the Creator God.

Carolyne Epp-Fransen guided her group on a walk through the Stations of the Cross, illustrated in unique paintings by artist Ovide Bighetty that combined the familiar images of the passion story with styles and symbols inspired by the Woodland Cree tradition.

Younger children participated in a session organized by Janice Dueck that included

games, a visit to Camp Assiniboia's massive cottonwood tree (which took a dozen children to surround), and a craft.

There was time later in the afternoon to take part in a variety of activities around the camp. These included wagon rides, the high ropes course, a birding hike with Ron Dueck, and tying quilt tops for Mennonite Central Committee in the lodge. Of course, some simply took this opportunity to relax. We were blessed with beautiful weather all day – a nice change from the cool temperatures we've been experiencing this spring.

After supper many people played the classic camp game "sticks," organized by Daniel Friesen and Paul Dyck. Later, as it began to get dark, there was singing outside around a campfire.

Given our focus on expressions of the Holy Spirit in different cultures, it was appropriate that the retreat fell on Pentecost Sunday. Our Sunday worship service, led by Julie Derksen, integrated the weekend theme with the Pentecost message. Kira Friesen and Larry Kehler gave reflections on this topic, and sharing from participants in some of the Saturday sessions gave those who only came out Sunday morning a glimpse of what occurred the day before. A lunch of lasagna provided a final opportunity to enjoy each other's company before going home.

After many weeks of planning by the retreat committee, consisting of LeAnn Friesen, Laura Thiessen, Moira Somers, and me, we were pleased to see everything come together so smoothly, and extend our thanks to everyone who helped. We hope that at the next retreat even more people feel encouraged to attend!



Carrie Jacobson, (above) an elder in the Riverton Fellowship Circle church group, Riverton, Manitoba, has moved to the Betel Home in Gimli. She had been part of our Fellowship for many years and was one of the founders of our congregation.

We as a congregation want to thank those who have stopped by to see Carrie in her new home. She has adjusted well to her new surroundings but loves to have visitors. Please continue to remember Carrie in prayer and that she will continue to have good health.

Love and Peace,

From the Riverton Fellowship Circle church group

Congratulations to *Brenda and Ed Anderson* of Princess Harbour, Manitoba! They celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary with family and friends at a supper and social evening on July 4, 2009 at Misty Lake Lodge north of Gimli.

Obituaries

Albert James Goosehead, age twelve years of Bloodvein River, Manitoba, passed away on June 27, 2009 after being beaten

by an adult. Albert was the oldest of Nadine Goosehead's three sons and is survived by his mother, two brothers, step-father Martin Fisher, and many relatives and friends. The death is an extreme blow to the family and the whole community. Pastor Jim Kinneman officiated at the interment in Bloodvein.

Deborah Carol Monkman, age 51 years of Hay River, Northwest Territories, was surrounded by her family when she slipped the bonds of earth and her illness to mount up with wings as eagles to be with the Lord on July 20, 2009.

Debbie grew up at Loon Straits, Manitoba as the eldest child of Edward and Deanna Monkman but spent her adult life in Hay River. In spite of her ten and one-half year battle with breast cancer, Debbie continued her family and work life and lent her strength and support to others who had cancer. She faced each hurdle with courage and determination, always keeping a positive attitude.

She is survived by her husband Wayne Monkman, daughter Holly and son Dane; mother Deanna; sisters Donna Mowatt, Cheryl Lea, Denise, Daphne and Danella von Gunten; brothers Daryl, Danny, Richard and Douglas; numerous in-laws, nieces, nephews and friends.

In addition to the service in Hay River, another service was held at the Riverton Community Hall on August 8 with Fred Peters officiating. Interment was at Loon Straits.

Martha (Moss Settee) Hladki of Winnipegosis, Manitoba passed away at the Winnipegosis Health Centre. Her funeral service was held at the Matheson Island Community Hall on July 29, 2009 with Ron Perepeluk

officiating. Burial followed in the local Community Cemetery.

Moss is survived by her partner Archie, her children Lisa and Andrew and their families; sisters Hazel Bird, Bev Puetz, Kathy Cooke, Linda Chalmers, Darlene, Elaine Perepeluk, Shelley Yatsko; brothers Charles (Sandy), Barry and Cliff; and many nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

Joseph Wilfred Albert (Bert) Saucier passed away on August 25, 2009 at the Red River Personal Care Home in Selkirk, Manitoba at the age of 65 years.

Bert was born in Rouyn, Quebec and spent most of his adult life working in the Northwest Territories and Fort McMurray, Alberta. He and his wife moved to Manitoba in 2003.

He is survived by his wife Elaine, sons Andre and Jason and two granddaughters; two sisters and two brothers; brothers-in-law Harold Monkman (Isabel), Glen Monkman and Wayne Monkman; sisters-in-law Joan Belanger (René), Mona Hatch (Eaon), Pat Broadhead (Ron), Bonnie Crowther (Roy) and Solange Saucier; as well as many nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

A memorial service was held at the Matheson Island Community Hall on September 3, with Fred Peters officiating.

Events Calendar

November 15, 2009: Peace Sunday

An emphasis on peacemaking and justice ministries as central in the mission of the church at all levels of its expression. To view resources, visit <http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/456>

June 30 - July 7, 2010

Mennonite Church Canada Assembly Calgary, AB, specific location and details TBA

For more events visit mennonitechurch.ca/events. Native Ministry related events can be submitted for the calendar. Submit events in writing to the mailing address on page 2, or email to imiller@mennonitechurch.ca.

You must be the change you want to see in the world.

—Mahatma Gandhi



Revelation – P9CJ9·∇·Δ^α

Names of the churches	Good points	Sins	Promise to over comers
бΔJσ-bUP ^α	▷Γ_οP9·Δσ·◁ ^α	▷·◁σJЦJ·Δσ·◁ ^α	9<P_9·◁ ^α
Ephesus	Good works Patience	Loss of love Backsliding	Heavenly food
ΔΛJ>_α ^x 2:1-7	Γ_οP9·Δ_α ^α ϷJVCJ·Δ ^α 2:2, 3:6	∇P·◁σJ·◁ ^α ▷γPΔ·∇·Δσ·◁ ^α 2:4, 5	P9P9J·Δ ·ΔJσ·Δ ^α 2:7
Smyrna	Heavenly treasure	None	Crown of life
JΓ>_α ^x 2:8-11	P9P9J·Δ Π<◁Ld·Δ ^α 2:9, 10	b·Δ ^α 9d ^α	ΛLΓΔd·Δ·◁_ο·b ^α 2:10
Pergamos	Steadfast in evil environment	Tolerance of corrupt doctrines	Hidden spiritual blessings
∇>bLΓ ^x 2:12-17	·∇·∇σ Γ·9 ∇LΓγσ ^b 2:13	L9P9_ο◁L9·Δ_α ^α 2:14, 15	Γ_α σbΓ_α 2:17
Thyatira	Love	Corrupt prophetess	Authority
Ц>CΔ>◁ 2:18-29	γPΔ·∇·Δ ^α 2:19	Δ·9 ΓγVξ 2:20-23	σbΓ_α PΔ_αdσ·∇ ^α 2:26-28
Sardis	Alive, but are dead	Inactivity	Righteous robe
γ>Π ^γ 3:1-6	◁σ ^c PVP9 ^α 3:4	b·Δ ^α PΓ_οP9P ^α 3:1	Ц·◁Λ ^α bσ·◁ ^α 3:5
Philadelphia	Keeping the Word	None	A spiritual pillar
Λξ◁UξΛ> ^x 3:7-13	LσJ ▷ΠPJ· 3:8	b·Δ ^α 9d ^α	P ^α L ^α b·Δb<·Δ ^α 3:12
Laodicea	None	Luke warm	Divine fellowship
ξ∇>ΠP> 3:14-22	b·Δ 9d ^α	∇b ∇P9U9_ο ^b 3:1-17	Ц·ΔCΛΓd ^b 3:21

Adapted from Thompson Chain Reference Bible.