

my friends

Intotemak

Winter 2010 Vol. 39, No. 4



"GRAPHICS TO SHEPHERDS"

David Bykelly '07

1/1/10



Preparation and the Journey

We are writing this as we complete an encouraging trip to southern Ontario in early November. We made contacts with many churches and organizations, as well as with numerous individuals. Making plans for workshops and a learning tour during next summer's Mennonite Church Canada

Assembly in Waterloo, Ontario was also on the agenda. Earlier this fall we travelled to Kelowna, BC to spend a long weekend with a local congregation. Several weeks later we were in Saskatchewan to participate in the area church's annual Equipping Day and other meetings.

Thank you to each one we met for your hospitality and for honouring us with your friendship and support! We have learned so much and have been encouraged and challenged as we shared with each of you. We praise God for the many positive things we see happening across Canada! We are all on a journey of learning, building relationships and working together to bring God's healing and hope to our world!

Now that these fall trips and other commitments have been completed our thoughts turn once more to the need to prepare for other times and events:

- Several responsibilities in the coming days – including the final compilation of this issue of INTOTEMAK – prod us to take time for the immediate preparation that is required to complete those tasks promptly. The calendar pages remind us of numerous commitments we have made into the future that also need attention even now.

- In the midst of numerous work and family commitments we are also entering the Advent season very soon -- the time in the church calendar when Christians prepare themselves spiritually for the coming of Jesus Christ into the world and the difference that makes in each of our lives. The culmination of Advent's time of preparation is the celebration of Christmas Day.

- The beginning of a new year is also fast approaching. What will the year 2011 bring our way? Will it mark a "new beginning" in some area of our life?

Today we live in a world where trips to outer space and space stations no longer make headlines; that are ordinary news stories. High speed internet, cell phones and texting are a way of life for many people, and "instant fixes" are the expect-

tation. We can leave home in the morning, get on an airplane and sit down to a meal or be part of a meeting across the country yet that same afternoon. With that kind of lifestyle, the destination is our goal.

We often forget that the time of preparation and the journey are as important – or maybe even more so – as the destination. The journey is where we learn if we are observant. I am reminded of a wonderful story, greatly summarized here:

A grandmother is walking with her young granddaughter and wants to share the love of God with the young girl. As they walk grandma tells her granddaughter about God and how much God loves her. The little girl is having trouble keeping up with her grandmother because she is in a big hurry to get to the store and they have no time to stop and look at all the things along the way. As a result, the girl has trouble listening as she is pulled along and she senses God as demanding and always in a hurry.

Another grandmother is also walking with her young granddaughter to the store. They are walking at a slower pace but while she is talking about God the grandmother points out things along the way that the girl shouldn't do or should watch out for. Instead of sensing God's love, the girl senses that God should be feared and obeyed.

Yet another grandmother is walking with her young granddaughter to the store. They walk at the young girl's pace and stop many times to look at the things the young girl wants to touch or observe. The grandmother talks about how God created the whole world, including the butterflies, the grass and the rocks and other things that they see on their walk. As her grandmother hugs her, the young girl can imagine God's love for her and all of creation and it feels right and good.

May your time of preparation this Advent season help you celebrate the birth of our Saviour with much joy and peace this Christmas. May your journey into the year 2011 be one of "backing into the future", as Terry LeBlanc reminded us at Native Assembly last July, rather than one of plunging forward without the wisdom learned in the past.

Neill & Edith von Gunten

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



Intotemak

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

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

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VISION HEALING & HOPE

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



Photos by Janet Plenert

Attendees of the Native Mennonite Ministries council meeting take an afternoon break along Lake Winnipeg in the area between Wanipigow and Manigotagan. Standing: Willis Busenitz (secretary, Montana), Neill and Edith von Gunten (Winnipeg). Sitting: Olivette McGhee (president, Alabama), Carol Roth (staff person, Mississippi), and Norman and Thelma Meade (Winnipeg).

Native Mennonite Ministries Council Meets in Winnipeg

The Native Mennonite Ministries fall council meeting was held in Manitoba from October 7 - 9, 2010. Native Ministry directors Neill and Edith von Gunten and Janet Plenert, Executive Secretary of Mennonite Church Canada Witness, welcomed the group to Winnipeg at the Thursday afternoon meeting on the campus of Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg. Barb Daniels of the Riverton (Manitoba) Fellowship Circle opened with devotions and also participated in the three-day meeting.

The group travelled to Manigotagan and Hollow Water on the east shore of Lake Winnipeg on Friday for a day of learning from local residents at the Wanipigow School and the Manigotagan Community Chapel, as well as taking time for council business. The closing business session was held in Winnipeg on Saturday morning.

Native Ministry (Mennonite Church Canada) and Native Mennonite Ministries (Mennonite Church USA) have developed a strong partnership over the years. Unfortunately several council members were



Fiddle music has made a strong comeback with the younger generation at the Wanipigow School and other schools within the Frontier School Division in northern Manitoba.

they did not have the necessary passports required by the political officials of our two countries. This negation of indigenous rights that causes us to be kept apart was grieved by all those present.

Cover artwork — The cover artwork, "Prophecies to Hunters" is picture #6 in the "Kisê-manitow Omiyikow-iswin" or "The Creator's Gift" series depicting the Christmas story. Page 12 artwork, "Choir of Angels" is picture #7 in the series. Ovide Bighetty, an artist originally from the Pukatawagan First Nations in northern Manitoba, was commissioned by the Indian Metis Christian Fellowship of Regina, Saskatchewan, to depict several series of Biblical texts and themes, of which this is one. Used with permission.



Chief Ovide Mercredi speaks to CSOP class at CMU.



Photos provided by CMU/CSOP

Back row: L-R - Irma Fast Dueck, Niki Enns Fehr, John Bell, Kenton Lobe. Middle row: Val Smith, Ray Vander Zaag. Front row: L-R - Martin Entz, Ovide Mercredi, Jarem Sawatsky, Meghan Thiesen, Rev. Cathy Campbell.

A Cree's Perspective on Non-violence and Racism

Chief Ovide Mercredi instructs at CMU's Canadian School of Peacebuilding

It takes imagination and genius to shift society from a culture of violence to a culture of peace, said Jarem Sawatsky, a professor of Peace and Conflict Transformation Studies at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) and the co-director of Canadian School of Peacebuilding (CSOP), a program of CMU.

It is the hope of Chief Ovide Mercredi, a former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations of Canada, current Chief of Mispawistik Cree Nation in Grand Rapids, Manitoba, and Chancellor of University College of the North, that the students of CSOP can foster this imagination and genius in a way that can positively impact his people.

Mercredi instructed the class, "Cree perspectives on non-violence" at CSOP this year.

This class drew in students from all over, including a few from CMU.

To Mercredi, living in a country and ascribing to a faith that says "respect all people" and "Christ loves all people the same," respectively, didn't stop him from experiencing racism.

"It was very in your face racism ... and I don't deserve to experience this. I told myself, 'Someday, when I can do something about it, I'm going to do something to love my people,'" he said.

The racism that Mercredi has experienced as well as his legal and Aboriginal background made him the ideal person to discuss non-violence with prospective peacebuilders.

According to one of the students of the class, Krista Loewen, who is a CMU student majoring in Peace and Conflict Transformation Studies (PACTS), this class and their experience at CSOP helped her truly understand the history of treaties and the differences between Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian interpretations.

"I could feel confident that I wasn't getting a watered down version of the treaties or an inaccurate interpretation ... he was the right person to be teaching this course," Loewen said.

According to Maraleigh Short, who participated in Mercredi's class and is also a PACTS major, "Ovide is in tune to the issues on and off reserves and between Aboriginals, Non-Aboriginals, and the government."

Mercredi believes that the students in his class "are thirsting for knowledge about indigenous people, who want to understand to make things different. They are going to contribute to our wellbeing as a people," he said.

It was very in your face racism ... and I don't deserve to experience this. I told myself, 'Someday, when I can do something about it, I'm going to do something to love my people.'

Short thinks that it is important for CSOP students to bear witness to the stories that so that they can be a part of the healing that is so essential for all peoples of Canada, she said.

*Rachel Bergen
Winnipeg, MB*



Photos by Dan Mering

ASUBPEESCHOSEEWAGONG

Grassy Narrows Community Honors 582 Indigenous Women who have been Murdered or Disappeared

The small room rang with the sounds of synchronous drumbeats. Eight women in a range of ages hit the large drum while their voices cried out the "Warrior Song." Young girls took their turns at leading the song, their voices rising above the beat. These women are the future of Asubpeechoseewagong Netum Anishinabek (Grassy Narrows, Ontario).

Community members, including the October Christian Peacemaker Team (CPT) delegation to Kenora/Grassy Narrows, gathered on the evening of 4 October 2010 to remember the lives of 582 Aboriginal women. The Native Woman's Association of Canada's Sisters in Spirit (SIS) initiative had set aside this day to honour women who have disappeared or been murdered in Canada over the last twenty years.

This degree of violence directed against indigenous women is way out of proportion to their representation (3 %) in the Canadian population.

SIS says that several factors contribute to this violence:

- Until 1985, an indigenous woman who married a non-indigenous person lost her status as "Indian" as well as their right to live on reserve and to access other services. This led to cultural isolation.
- Residential schools resulted in a cycle of trauma and abuse that continues today.
- Government policies in the 1960s allowed indigenous children to be removed

from their communities and to be placed in non-indigenous homes. Again, this resulted in the break-up of families, loss of cultural identity and, often, trauma and abuse.

Because of this culture of de-legitimization, some men have accurately assumed they can get away with racialized and sexualized violence against the women. In October 2004, Amnesty International released *Stolen Sister: A Human Rights Response to Discrimination and Violence against Indigenous Women in Canada*.

In their findings, they noted the following:

- According to a Canadian government statistic, young Native women are five times more likely than other women of the same age to die as the result of violence.
 - Studies suggest that assaults against Indigenous women are not only more frequent; they are also often particularly brutal.
 - In only 53% of the cases involving Native women was someone charged, whereas the average rate for homicide charges among Canada's general population is 84%.
- The report brought the issue to the attention of the Canadian government and the media, but they continue to be unresponsive. Native women's organisations are asking for all levels of government to develop a comprehensive program to stop this violence.

But on 4 October in Kenora, Ontario, there were small signs that at the grass-roots change is happening. The community was gathered for the fifth year and the group was the largest yet. In addition to the women, men were there as allies to remember the lost ones, and to call for an end to the violence. And the young women were there. Judy da Silva, the leader of Grassy Narrows Women's Drum Group said, "I do not tell my daughters to shut up. I want them to grow up with strong voices. I don't want them to be silenced." As these young women sang out clearly, older women from the audience came up quietly to stand behind them to support them in their song.

*Taken from the CPT website
November 4, 2010*

To receive CPT's quarterly newsletter by email or in print, go to <http://cpt.org/participate/subscribe>

CPT's MISSION: What would happen if Christians devoted the same discipline and sacrifice to nonviolent peacemaking that armies devote to war? Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) seeks to enlist the whole church in organized, nonviolent alternatives to war and places teams of trained peacemakers in regions of lethal conflict.

The Jubilee Fund: An Opportunity to Get Involved

The idea of establishing a Jubilee Fund began in 1990 in response to discussions between the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (the forerunner of Mennonite Church Canada) and Mennonite Central Committee Canada on how to respond to the year 1992 -- the 500 year anniversary of Columbus' arrival in the Americas -- and 1993 -- the year of Indigenous Populations, as designated by the United Nations. The decision was that these two occasions offered an opportunity to extend a Jubilee gesture to Aboriginal people in Canada and to redress, in a small measure, some of the tragic losses they suffered during the past centuries. The hoped-for intent was to also move beyond broken relationships and promises to the establishment of new relationships and new opportunities.

The Jubilee Fund is invested with Mennonite Foundation of Canada. Earnings generated by the endowment are granted to selected projects that meet the fund's criteria.

The Jubilee Fund continues to be an endowment housed with Mennonite Foundation of Canada. Donations are to be sent to their offices and designated for the Jubilee Fund. Each year the interest is granted to selected projects that meet the fund's criteria.

Leaders of Mennonite Church Canada Witness and Mennonite Central Committee Canada signed a recommitment to the Jubilee Fund in 2010. New donations are being solicited and a new grant application form was chosen that embodies the spirit of Jubilee.

Here is an updated description of the fund:

The Jubilee Fund is a project of Mennonite Central Committee Canada and Mennonite Church Canada that attempts to address in a small way the imbalance of wealth and power between people of Indigenous (First Nations, Metis, Inuit) descent and Canada's settler population.

The Jubilee Fund comes out of a desire to pursue justice and eliminate oppression.

The biblical "Year of Jubilee", as described in Leviticus 25, was a celebration that God commanded the Israelites to fulfill every 50 years. It was a time for the land that was sold within the previous 50 years to revert back to its previous ownership, and any person enslaved within that 50 years would be freed. People would return to their family property and clan. As a result, no one would be placed in a permanent state of poverty, enslavement, landlessness or disconnection from their family.

Through the Jubilee Fund, Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Central

Committee Canada provide their constituencies with the opportunity to participate in a culturally sensitive holistic witness to Jesus Christ in a broken world. This fund is a symbol of God's healing and hope for a better world; a world in which bridges are built so that newcomers to this continent and the Original Peoples can live together in communities of grace, joy and peace. This fund was created through networking of Mennonite Church Canada, Mennonite Central Committee, Indigenous partners and community groups.

The grant aims to:

- Directly benefit grass roots or non-profit Indigenous organizations/groups/communities in Canada.
- Promote an experience of jubilee for Indigenous people.
- Address injustice related specifically to land.

Geographical Target Area: Jubilee Fund issues grants to grass roots or non-profit Indigenous organizations, groups and/or communities in Canada.

What we fund: Projects related to land, including, but not limited to: initiatives involved in reconnecting people to their traditional land base, protection and reclamation of sacred sites and traditional or treaty land, sustainable land use, environmental justice initiatives. **We do not fund:** Individuals, Non-Indigenous organizations, Fundraising projects

Criteria:

- Groups or organizations applying for grants must have local Indigenous leadership.
- Project must be rooted in the Indigenous community within which it will take place, and take direction from the Indigenous community it serves.
- Priority will be given to groups who lack access to federal/tribal funding.
- Priority will be given to groups who incorporate the leadership of women, elders and children into their project.

Annual Proposal Deadline: The proposal deadline is February 15. Notification of the result will be received by March 30. Successful applicants will receive their grant by April 30.

To make a donation:

Please write cheques to Mennonite Foundation of Canada, and designate "for Jubilee Fund" on the memo line. All donations are tax-deductible. Cheques may be mailed to:

Mennonite Foundation of Canada
12 - 1325 Markham Road Winnipeg, MB R3T 4J6
Phone: 1-800-795-2037 or 488-1985 in Winnipeg
Email: mfcwpg@mennonitefoundation.ca

To receive a grant application contact:

Native Ministry, Mennonite Church Canada
600 Shaftesbury Boulevard
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3P 0M4
nativeministry@mennonitechurch.ca

OR

Indigenous Work, Mennonite Central Committee Canada
489 Victor Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G 1R1
seagle@mennonitecc.ca



Retirement Announcement

It may not be too surprising, but I am sad nonetheless to announce the resignation of Neill and Edith von Gunten. They have indicated that retirement is beckoning and will thus conclude their time with MC Canada on May 31, 2011.

Neill and Edith's ministry has, in their words, 'touched six decades beginning in 1967.' They first served as volunteers, and then began in paid roles in 1969 as they began what would be 36 years living in Aboriginal communities along Lake Winnipeg. Their gentle spirits and wise ways resulted in their acceptance into Aboriginal communities in profound ways and the deep relationships they have made continue to be evident. Neill was made an elder and was also mayor of Manigotagan for a time. They also worked above and beyond to produce a book on Matheson Island's history, entitled, *From Paddles to Propellers: The History of Matheson Island, A Fishing Community*.

Neill and Edith became co-directors of Native Ministry for Mennonite Church Canada Witness in the fall of 2005 and have been delightful team members since then. I will miss them, as I am sure we all will. The process of finding a new director(s) for Native Ministry will of course be delicate, and important. I invite your prayers for the process, and also for Neill and Edith as they look ahead to the next phase of faithful living.

*Janet Plenert, Executive Secretary
Mennonite Church Canada Witness
Winnipeg, MB*



OBITUARIES

Tom Pascal, a resident of Pauingassi, Manitoba, since birth, passed away on September 30, 2010, just two months short of his 84th birthday. He was always an ardent trapper and energetic worker until health issues sapped his strength. As a result of these issues, he spent a number of years at the Central Park Lodge in Winnipeg, where he was living when he passed away. His body was flown back to Pauingassi for burial and Allan Owen officiated at the interment. Tom is survived by his wife Janet as well as many relatives and friends.



Caroline (Carrie) Jacobson (nee Collins), age 89 years, passed away on Wednesday, October 6, 2010 at the Betel Home in Gimli, Manitoba, where she was living.

Carrie's parents were living in Big Bullhead, south of present-day Pine Dock, when Carrie was born and she remained in that area until she began her livelihood of cooking on the various boats that plied Lake Winnipeg. She retired to a home in Riverton. Once settled in Riverton Carrie became one of the founding members of the Riverton Fellowship Circle congregation. She was a very active participant in services, planning meetings, fundraising events and other gatherings. She also represented the Riverton Fellowship Circle as an elder at numerous functions and when the group visited other churches Carrie was always ready to share and offer a prayer.

Her nickname was the "Road Runner" because she was always ready to go somewhere with the church group – whether it was cooking at Native Camp Week for many years, sitting at a Native Ministry board meeting all day or attending

the annual delegate assembly of the larger church on behalf of the Riverton congregation. She travelled to many of the Native Assembly gatherings across North America over the years and it was hard when Carrie finally had to say that her health would no longer let her travel that distance.

Carrie leaves to embrace her memory daughter (sister) Pat Palson, sons Johnny and Clarence (daughters-in-law Jeanette and Irene), brother Russell, three grandchildren, five great-grandchildren, numerous nieces, nephews, family and friends.

A memorial service was held at the Riverton Community Hall on October 12, with Barb Daniels leading the service. Cremation followed and interment will be held in the Spring of 2011. In lieu of flowers, the family asked that donations be given to the Riverton Fellowship Circle.



Isaac Froese (better known as Ike to his friends) died on September 8, 2010 at the Victoria General Hospital in Winnipeg, Manitoba at the age of 83 years.

Ike began his career as a teacher and he and his wife Margaret devoted many adult years to Native Ministry work, first on the Hopi reservation in Arizona and later through the Native Ministries program of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada.

First, the Froese family moved to Oraibi, Arizona, on a Voluntary Service assignment with the General Conference Mennonite Church in the 1950s. Ike was the school principal as well as a teacher during that time. Elmer Myron, a former student and now a Hopi pastor and counsellor, remembers Ike as a male spiritual role model during his junior high days. "He didn't seem to get mad but would still discipline us with



love,” says Elmer.

The family returned to Manitoba where Ike continued with his teaching profession; however, he was soon invited back to Arizona in a pastoral role at the Oraibi Mennonite Church in Kykotsmovi. A strong part of their ministry was to encourage local Hopi Christian leadership in the church.

Elmer Myron remembers those years: “I graduated from the 8th grade in 1962 and that same year went off reservation to Phoenix, AZ to attend the Phoenix Indian High School (a government boarding school) for four years. Ike and Margaret and their family came to visit me and my sister Joann during my freshman year. I was surprised that they would travel more than 350 miles from Kykotsmovi to check on us. They visited us like we were their children and this lifted my spirit since we came home after nine months away from our parents. Thank-you for your encouragement!”

These experiences shared with the Hopi people taught Ike and his family the richness of diverse cultures, traditions and spiritual expressions so upon his return to Manitoba, the majority of his working years were devoted to teaching, pastoral work and administrative work with Native Ministries. In addition to his initial volunteer involvement, Ike served as Executive Secretary of Native Ministries for five years, from the summers of 1974 – 1979. Ike and Margaret’s home was always open to others, whether it was for staff meetings or a place to stay overnight when staff came to Winnipeg. Edith von Gunten remembers well how Ike and Margaret lovingly took her and her two young children into their home for two weeks or so in the fall of 1972 when Neill had to have emergency knee surgery because of an accident during the Canadian Mennonite Bible College alumni and student football game! Ike’s pastoral, caring ways and genuine interest came through to staff and community people alike during his tenure in the Native Ministries office. He encouraged, challenged, probed and supported the staff and they became his friends, not just his co-workers. One way to see Ike get agitated was to call him “the boss”, in jest! He always emphasized teamwork and said that all of us were on the same team; we just had different responsibilities and lived in different communities.

Ike was a deep thinker and was con-

stantly searching for better ways to manage varied situations and encourage others. Ike had a great love of learning and the more he learned the more questions he had, the more eager he was to explore new ideas. His pleasure in new, thought-provoking experiences was equalled by his need to document and organize them, as his boxes of journals and meticulously catalogued photo collections attest.

Despite his poor eyesight, Isaac saw beauty wherever he looked. Many of the

Dear Ike:

In body you are no longer with us so we cannot address you on that level; however, in spirit we can and do so with a great deal of pleasure.

You were born and raised in a Christian home and have clearly been shown the values of life in the Lord. At an early age you decided to follow that way. What a blessing! We first got to know you 60 years ago at Canadian Mennonite Bible College in the midst of making final preparations for a career; measures were also undertaken then for a life’s companion.

You developed a keen interest in other people by listening to their needs and aspirations. This was very much noticed in the classrooms you worked in. The time you spent with the Hopi people in Arizona with your family was a very special time. You helped many with your non-assertive approach and in turn you learned a great deal about another worldview, which has left a pleasant flavour in the minds of many people.

With a great deal of pleasure we recall the time you were our director in the Native Ministries office. This time you interacted with the Cree, Ojibwa and Metis people of Manitoba and even beyond. Though this setting was much different from the Hopi setting, your influence and contribution is engraved in stone in both settings. We have all been blessed and herewith want to express our heartfelt appreciation.

You have now gone to be with your Redeemer, whom you served well.

*Henry and Elna Neufeld
Winnipeg, MB*

images he captured on his camera were passed on as treasured birthday and anniversary cards. He also nurtured beauty in the people around him through his genuine interest and encouragement. Isaac cherished his moments with family, friends, neighbours, and others, embracing everyone he met. Isaac’s connection with people sustained him, and blessed all of us.

[The obituary was included in the Fall 2010 issue of INTOTEMAK.]

New Year’s Cookies



5 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 1/2 teaspoons white sugar
1 1/2 teaspoons salt
1 pinch ground nutmeg
1 (.25 ounce) envelope active dry yeast
1/4 cup warm water
1 1/2 cups warm milk
3 egg, lightly beaten
1 1/2 cups raisins
1 quart oil for frying

1 teaspoon melted butter
1 teaspoon warm water
1 cup confectioners’ sugar (icing sugar)
3/4 teaspoon cornstarch
1 teaspoon heavy cream
1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract

Directions

In a large bowl, mix the flour, sugar, salt, and nutmeg. Dissolve the yeast in warm water. Stir the yeast mixture, milk, and eggs into the dry ingredients until just combined. Fold in the raisins. Cover and let rise for about 2 hours. Heat the oil in a deep-fryer to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C).

To prepare the glaze, mix the melted butter and 1 teaspoon warm water in a small bowl. Stir in the confectioners’ sugar, cornstarch, cream, and vanilla.

Drop the dough by rounded tablespoons into the hot oil. Cook 2 to 5 minutes, until golden brown. Drain on paper towels and cool slightly. Dip each cookie into the glaze and set aside to completely cool.

Events Calendar

March 11, 2011

"Removing Barriers, Building Bridges" public event at the Circle of Life Thunderbird House, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Speaker is Terry LeBlanc, Mi'kmaq/Acadian theologian and director of My People International.

March 12, 2011

Spring Partnership Circle meeting at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Special speaker is Terry LeBlanc, Mi'kmaq/Acadian theologian and director of My People International and the North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies.

April 28 - 30, 2011

Spring meeting of the Native Mennonite Ministries Council at the Light of Life Mennonite Church, Farmington, New Mexico.

July 4 - 8, 2011

Mennonite Church Canada Assembly at University of Waterloo/Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ontario. Theme: "It's Epic: Remembering God's Future", taken from Revelations 21:1-4, 22-26 and 22:1-5. Assembly sessions for Delegates, Youth and Children & Junior Youth.

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.

Check out the Native Ministry webpage at <http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/899>. Read back issues of Intotemak, find materials available for loan from the Resource Centre and preview Reaching up to God Our Creator.

All of these resources can be borrowed from the Mennonite Church Canada Resource Centre – phone 204-888-6781 or toll-free 1-866-888-6785. Check out the Resource Centre website at <http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre> for more resources that are available for loan.

Resources

Lost Harvest: Prairie Indian Farmers and Government Policy, by Sarah A. Carter. *McGill-Queen's University Press, McGill-Queen's Native and Northern Series*. #3, 1992, 352 pages.

Agriculture on Plains Indian reserves is generally thought to have failed because the Native peoples lacked either an interest in farming or an aptitude for it. In *Lost Harvests* Sarah Carter reveals that reserve residents were anxious to farm and expended considerable effort on cultivation; government policies, more than anything else, acted to undermine their success.

Despite repeated requests for assistance from Plains Indians, the Canadian government provided very little help between 1874 and 1885, and what little they did give proved useless. Although drought, frost, and other natural phenomena contributed to the failure of early efforts, reserve farmers were determined to create an economy based on agriculture and to become independent of government regulations and the need for assistance.

Officials in Ottawa, however, attributed setbacks not to economic or climatic conditions but to the Indians' character and traditions which, they claimed, made the Indians unsuited to agriculture. In the decade following 1885 government policies made farming virtually impossible for the Plains Indians. They were expected to subsist on one or two acres and were denied access to any improvements in technology: farmers had to sow seed by hand, harvest with scythes, and thresh with flails. After the turn of the century, the government encouraged land surrenders in order to make good agricultural land available to non-Indian settlers. This destroyed any chance the Plains Indians had of making agriculture a stable economic base.

Through an examination of the relevant published literature and archival sources in Ottawa, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, Carter provides the first in-depth study of government policy, Indian responses and the socio-economic condition of the reserve communities on the prairies

in the post-treaty era.

Sarah Carter was an Assistant Professor in the Department of History, University of Calgary, when she wrote *Lost Harvests*.

This review is taken from the book's website and is also available through the Mennonite Church Canada website; <http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1437>

The Land, Our Life: Indigenous Rights and Our Common Future.

Kairos Campaign 2010-11: Education and Action Guide. 2010. 23 pages.

"The KAIROS campaign this year focuses on Indigenous Rights, resource extraction and food security. The actions we as individuals must make do not seem easy – because they are not easy. We are an addicted people! We are addicted to the very resources which pollute our planet and make life for Indigenous peoples so terrible. Just as the rich man who left Jesus' company was 'shocked and grieving,' we too have too many possessions -- and too many addictions." (Taken from a worship reflection by Janet Gray at the BC/Yukon Regional KAIROS meeting at Sorrento, BC on October 3, 2010.)

This study guide includes:

- four case studies for learning and discussion,
- worship resources,
- a Bible study guide, and
- a workshop outline entitled "Find Your Voice: Workshop on free, Prior and Informed Consent".

Study guides can be ordered from:

Kairos: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives

Suite 200, 310 Dupont Street

Toronto, ON M5R 1V9

By telephone: 416-463-5312 or toll-free at 1-877-403-8933

www.kairoscanada.org

Unfinished Business about Indian Residential Schools

Persistently prodded about the unfinished Indian Residential School issue and its highly disturbing effects on Aboriginal communities across the nation, the Federal Government of Canada initiated the first week-long symposium to address this unforgettable chapter of Canadian history. The event, held June 16 – 19, 2010, was chaired by Manitoba's Ojibwa judge, Murray Sinclair. The symposium was launched at a historic meeting place that has come to be popularly known in Manitoba as The Forks. True to its pre-European geography, The Forks is not only the place where rivers meet but where people also convene as they have since time immemorial. Like separate bodies of water, the rivers, the Red (miskosiipi) and the Assiniboia (Stoney Peoples), two vibrant streams of history continue to flow on. Will they converge and flow side by side together hereafter all the way to be ultimately received by the global sea? Such is the remaining, long standing question.

Sadly, the Indian Residential Schools were instituted as part and parcel of the church's mission, a historic reality from which no church can now dissociate itself. Even though the funding for constructing the required buildings and for finances required to administer the operation, including the teaching program, fell into federal jurisdiction, the administering churches cannot escape accountability.

The virtual absence of proven indigenous knowledge in the IRS curriculum is, in retrospect, quite astounding. Room for Ojibwa art motifs in the IRS classroom? Hardly. Or those of the Cree, the Blackfoot, the Mohawk or the Salish people? Not really. Did Inuit legends and poetry or those of the Chipewyan or Innu have their place in the schools' literature curriculum? Was there opportunity for the art of indigenous music of dance and dress? Hardly. Was there room for well-proven, increasingly relevant, ecological insights? Were the strong concepts of kinship alliance present or were they merely substituted by distant senior clergy functioning as staff in the school?



A special "Healing Box" was designed to hold the tears and any physical mementos that survivors want to release after they share in a public circle. The box was always nearby and will travel to events across the country.

Even though the establishment of IRS programs across Canada predate the Mennonite entry into the Native scene, it would be erroneous to wash our hands from the colonial stigma. As some Mennonite participants reflected on the proceedings of the symposium at The Forks, they also reflected on their own history, a history in which the construction of a central village school tended to go hand in hand with the establishment of the villages themselves. Advocating the Christian faith and a commitment to provide schooling, we observed, go together. The symposium mirrored back a history of our own, as authentic mission often does. Thus, educational and religious emphasis came in a single package.

Although the educational mission ventures of Mennonites in the 1950s did not follow the residential school patterns - not in architecture, not in a philosophy of assimilation governing the schools - nevertheless, it did take place. Mission-minded Mennonites, with an ear to the Native

people, actively supported the initiation of community-based schools to be located in a number of Cree, Ojibwa and Metis communities where Mennonites were active in mission work. A few of the Mennonite school buildings in Aboriginal communities remain visible. These can be seen scattered across the woodlands of northern Manitoba, many of them still functioning. Unlike many of the government-sponsored IRS buildings, also still visible, the still existing Mennonite sponsored Native schools were originally constructed of timber, sometimes obtained locally. Consistently, the school buildings were located in the heart of the community itself. How the Mennonites weathered the cross-winds of cultural imposition via the school program of government and church will remain for ardent students of culture to discern.

Now What?

The federally-sponsored four-day exchange at The Forks in Winnipeg does not end the gruelling IRS chapter of Canada's

All photos by Neill von Ganten



The Sacred Fire was lit at the 5:30 a.m. ceremony at The Forks in Winnipeg on Wednesday, the opening day of the Truth and Reconciliation national event. The fire was kept burning until the closing ceremonies were finished on Saturday evening.



A Jingle Dress is known as a prayer dress and is to be worn for the specific purpose of healing. These Jingle Dancers were part of the closing ceremony and pow-wow at the TRC event in Winnipeg.

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Native education history. Scars of the IRS remain deeply etched. If cross-cultural understanding surfaced during the initial four-day event, it lay not in any diplomatically engineered correction of a failed system. Rather, the credibility, if future efforts are followed through, will predictably result in the creation of forums where a longstanding dissidence dividing two bodies of people can be addressed. What, besides a replay of guilt, are we to live by? The cultural distance is still there. Treaties, undergirded by Canada's constitution, remain intact. Our co-existence -- geographically, economically, politically, religiously and increasingly vocationally -- persists. Continued need for education is a given.

How two rivers can or will flow side by side together remains to be seen. The challenge of that mutuality is far from being only a Native issue. It is far from being answered for Canadians on either side of the cultural stream. A stance of mutual yielding

is there before two distinct peoples, each arising from distinct heritages. The answer will require renewed, keen alertness on the part of both churches and the government. That alertness can only be achieved as representatives of the Native people, the government and the churches are prepared to address the sharp reality of their cultural differences.

Despite massive changes around us -- be they political, geographic, economic, environmental or religious in nature -- there is one constant to be recognized; namely, that a people, any people, who do not educate their young cannot fruitfully survive in this or any era. Not to educate the growing young spells demise. Schools for pre-adolescent children anywhere are seemingly a must. To the extent that they can be community-initiated and culturally based, there is hope for survival.

To the "now what" question we might venture a few thoughts:

- The educational courses in Mennonite learning institutes include those dealing with an upgraded understanding of Aboriginal societies. Mennonite education should be consonant with Mennonite mission and service ventures.

- Mennonites might well undertake some leadership in advancing cultural orientations for teachers, social workers, medical staff, economic development and religious workers entering Native communities.

- Aboriginal art and music might find a place in Mennonite circles.

- The search could be continued for honourable ways to come to terms with a chapter of oppressive history undertaken in the name of Christianity.

- Means and ways could be found to promote the writing of local Native histories undertaken by Native students.

Perhaps there is room for renewed daylight to undergo its designated shift in the skies above us. The overdue reality of meeting on common ground level took place June 16 – 19.

*Taken from a report by
Menno Wiebe, Winnipeg, MB.*

