

Look back to move forward

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True to his Mi'kmaq/Acadian heritage, Terry LeBlanc uses stories to put his message across. It's culturally appropriate and it's biblical.

"Do you remember when..." he said, referring to the many times God encouraged the Hebrews to examine their history and how God has been with them throughout it. LeBlanc was addressing the annual Spring Partnership Circle in Winnipeg, Man. on May 11, 2011 at Thunderbird House.

With a story from his childhood about a hunting trip with his father and grandfather, LeBlanc illustrated one of the concepts that shape Aboriginal perspectives – the importance of knowing where we have come from.

As father, son and grandfather ventured deeper into the woods and territory unfamiliar to the boy, Terry repeatedly stopped his grandfather to share his concerns about becoming lost.

His grandfather encouraged him to continue to look back over his shoulder, to remember how the forest looks from that perspective, which will be different than it appeared as they were passing by. "Look over your shoulder twice as much as where you are going, and then you'll be able to find your way back home," his grandfather summarized.

"It's a teaching that has never led me wrong," LeBlanc said. "[Looking back] is not simply nostalgia...it's a learning tool...we get where we are because of our history."

LeBlanc has spent more than 30 years helping Native people embrace the "person, work, teaching, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ." But at the time he came to faith, he had to choose between being a Christian and being an Indian. "I couldn't be both," he said.



At that time, in the 1970s, he felt that there was no place for him to serve in the wider church unless he wore a suit and cut his hair short – so that's what he did. Since that time, LeBlanc has sought ways to draw from traditional Aboriginal culture in a meaningful way, and he is sharing what he has discovered with others.

Praise God for those who seek new ways to share the Good News across a diverse range of cultures and traditions.

Join the Mennonite Church Canada Facebook Group and watch video clips of Terry LeBlanc or download his interview with Church Matters, Mennonite Church Canada's radio podcast, at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1496

We invite you to share with your congregation the following story from Mennonite Church Canada Native Ministry about Terry LeBlanc who is the Executive Director of My People International – a holistic ministry program with and for Native North Americans and the founding Director of the North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Training – or NAIITS – among other positions. The story should take no more than 2 minutes to read aloud. You might also wish to include it in your church newsletter.

"For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 3:11