

# my friends Intotemak

Fall 2011 Vol. 40, No. 3



*Taken during the Churches Council on Theological Education Conference which included sacred fires and dancing to open and close the event.*



## Inside

Connecting Mennonites and First Nations...3

Camping in Pauingassi...6

NAITS...8

Can you hear the drum?...10



# There's Hope Together



Arnold Spirit is a fourteen year old Native living on a terribly broken reservation near Spokane, Washington.<sup>1</sup>

One day, his geometry teacher takes him aside and tells him that he has to get off the rez. "You've got to go somewhere where there is hope, or you'll die in this place!" Arnold takes him seriously. Going home to his parents, he asks, "Mom, Dad. . . where can I

find hope? I've got to find hope." They pause, look each other in the eyes, and with urgent, united voices they say, "White people. They've got hope."

Is it true? Do white people have hope? Do they possess it? Yeah, in many, many ways, it certainly is the case. Whites have the hope of economic power, the hope of social acceptance and favor, the hope of doing things natives can't, the hope of not being racialized on a daily basis because of their whiteness, and so on. White people have plenty of hope. But as Arnold moves away from his troubled, impoverished rez to the well-to-do white farming town of Redden, he realizes that many non-natives have got their share of problems. *And more importantly, Arnold discovers in that very white place, that his indigenous community has a lot of beauty - even some signs of hope.* If only the two communities could share their different 'hopes' with one another.

The good news for those who "hope in Christ" is that our Creator's greatest desire is for us to do exactly that. . . to share *all things* with one another, to do life together in hope-filled ways, and to come alongside one another when we can do nothing but hope beyond hope because our world is so unjust. The apostle Paul once put it like this: *"And this is the mystery of the gospel! Jesus tore down the walls we used to keep each other at a distance. Instead of continuing with two groups of people separated by centuries of animosity and suspicion, he created a new humanity, a fresh start for everybody!" (Ephesians 2).*

This is my great passion - to see and experience a life-giving reconciliation between native and non-native - and I know that many of your hearts are also consumed by this prophetic vision! To walk that walk of mutual respect and celebration of one another is what we long for. Some of us have been journeying that good road for years. Others are

just beginning. And by the Creator's grace, we *will* reach that glorious day when, in the words of Chief Dan George (Tsilil-Waututh), the dominant dreams of assimilation are laid aside for a genuine "integration of hearts and minds."

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Steve Heinrichs. I was born in S'olh Temexw, traditional Sto:lo territory, also known as the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. I'm married to a beautiful woman named Ann, and together we have three precious children. Two members of our 'clan' are indigenous - Salish and Nuu-chah-nulth.

Last month, we moved to Treaty One Territory (Winnipeg) as I was invited to become the new Native Ministry Director for Mennonite Church Canada. It's an incredible honor to be given this role - one carried out with such faithfulness by Edith and Neill von Gunten. I pray that I can walk as humbly and justly as they have over the past five years, walking in steadfast solidarity with both indigenous and Mennonite communities. What a tremendous privilege!

It's also a great gift to assume responsibilities for this newsletter. I pray that you'll be encouraged, inspired, and lovingly challenged by what you read in this issue and those to come. And of course, I invite your insightful feedback, comments and contributions. This magazine is yours, it's a collaborative effort, and I hope it reflects in some measure the inclusive spirit of the gospel.

Peace to you, and megwitch,

Steve Heinrichs  
Director, Native Ministry



<sup>1</sup>This story comes from Sherman Alexie's wonderful novel, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (2007).



**EDITOR**

Steve Heinrichs  
sheinrichs@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

**COST OF PUBLICATION**

\$15.00 a year for four issues.

Donations above the cost of publication will receive a tax-deductible receipt. Please send payment by cheque, VISA or MasterCard. Cheques are payable to Mennonite Church Canada/Intotemak.

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.

**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.

# Connecting Mennonites and First Nations

Oh, Siem, "Tansi Neechewham- Hello My Good Friend", Honoured elders. My name is Brander McDonald - Strongraven/Standing Bear. I am a Status Cree First Nation with membership to the Peguis Nation in Hodgson, Manitoba. Born in Winnipeg in 1959, I spent the early part of my childhood in Grand Rapids, Manitoba. I was raised in an indigenous Christian home and was led to the Creator Redeemer by my mother at the age of four. That teaching became the focal point to my life, and I am happy to say that my entire family shares the same spiritual values.

One of my first memories was standing on an empty fish box and sharing with my First Nations neighbors - the younger siblings of Ovide Mecredi (Former Grand Chief Assembly of First Nations) - about my new friend the Creator Redeemer. I was just four and half years old. Today, I live in Chilliwack, BC - traditional Sto:lo territory - and am married to a wonderful Mohawk woman. Together, we are blessed by two sons and wonderful grandchildren.

This fall, I was invited by Mennonite Church British Columbia to become their *Indigenous Relations Coordinator*, helping the church connect in deeper ways to the host peoples of this place. I am excited about this opportunity.

Over that last 20 years I have noticed a shift in the sentiment towards native ministry. With the apologies of the churches in Canada in the mid 90's and the subsequent apology by the government of Canada in 2008, there seems to be a genuine move towards mutual dialogue between native and non-natives.

Churches are now feeling the importance of putting hands and feet to the words of reconciliation in their own backyard. Some churches are even realizing that reconciliation is not primarily about evangelism and conversion, but being with, learning from, seeking justice alongside of. . . and so experiencing, together, the good news. The problem, however, is that many do not know how to go about it. They don't have the proper knowledge base on First Nations culture to proceed. They are looking to ministries of this kind that can guide them into respectful relationships with native communities.

One of my dreams is to help churches like MCBC see that there is room at the table of Christ for indigenous peoples as equal partners. Often, 'Native Ministries' are keen on reaching out to natives - short term missions, vacation bible schools, brief contacts and revival meetings - but what is missing is opportunity for native peoples to reciprocate. . . to develop a relationship back to the church as equitable teachers of what it means to be a Christian. As a result, the divide widens between the represented native community and the 'ministering' church as the basis for the relationship is merely one of need, not one of true sharing and understanding (i.e., "they held *all things* in common," Acts 2).

Yet when native people see a non-native Christianity that is authentically interested in appreciating First Nations peoples, learning their wisdom and ways, let the feast begin! This is something indigenous sisters and brothers can get excited about. Being seen as peoples who have the ability to share their spiritual insights and healing journey as means of assisting the body of Christ in its walk. . . that's where we need to go, and that's where (I believe!) we are headed.



Jill Smith McDonald

Brander McDonald

Brander McDonald,  
*Indigenous Relations Coordinator,  
Mennonite Church British Columbia*



Grade 8 & 9 students at St. Mary's Residential School. Right, Ched Myers.

## A People Who Remember

**T**his past August, Ched Myers – Mennonite theologian and activist (see [www.chedmyers.org](http://www.chedmyers.org)) – spoke at the Creative World Justice Festival held in Mission, B.C. Significantly, the site of the event was the former grounds of the St. Mary's Residential School (1863-1984), located on traditional Sto:lo territory. Ched invited his audience – a Christian gathering exploring ways to pursue global justice – to remember the dismembered, hidden story of local injustice. Specifically, Ched summoned us to a deep wrestling with the history of cultural genocide in Canada, and to concrete participation in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Discipleship that remembers a crucified Saviour demands nothing less. What follows is a portion of Ched's talk.

Thanks to Sto:lo elders Ray and Millie Silver for their welcome onto this land, and to Cheryl Bear and her band for singing us into this place.

Tonight, I'd like to talk about the stories of the people of this place, and our need to acknowledge them. Unfortunately, we European North Americans will do anything to avoid walking into the dark forest of our history to confront the truth of our bloody past. But we must do a bit of that, gathered as we are here this weekend in Mission, B.C. You see, everybody has a story. And to come

to a place is to walk into (and onto) a story. As people of faith, we should aspire to be responsible and sensitive visitors, not ignorant or blustery tourists. This means taking the time and attention required to learn the stories of the place we have come to.

What does this have to do with "creative world justice"? Everything. Because most of the injustice in our world, past and present, is the direct or indirect result of human beings not respecting the stories of places and peoples they encountered. Structural poverty, human trafficking, environmental destruction, labor exploitation, human rights violations – you name it, it all ultimately stems from ways in which we have put people and places at the service of profit, power and privilege.

The issues of violence and injustice we face today, without exception, have deep roots in history, in choices that some people made to ignore the integrity of other people and their places. This is especially true on this continent, where European conquest and colonization displaced and dismembered indigenous human cultures and exploited and destroyed their lands. This centuries long process was justified by the religious conviction that only European stories and material well being mattered. And

we continue to deny that past because we are committed to the myth of our own essential nobility and innocence, and we are desperate to hang on to our privilege and power.

... Dear friends, Creative World Justice begins right here. In this province, where most of you were born and raised. In this Fraser Valley, where white society built its prosperity on the "false gospel" of settler entitlement and stolen land. And on these very grounds where a residential school once confused European superiority with the "good news to the poor" and as a result, the "least among us," whom Jesus specifically instructed Christians to serve, were instead systematically disenfranchised.

Yeah, every place has a story, but the story of this place is so painful that we've conveniently forgotten it. Best not to bring up the past. You know, white Canadians don't really have to pay attention to this national Truth and Reconciliation process regarding the residential school legacy. It's all so, ah, complicated, you know? Better to just let sleeping dogs lie; the past is past. Let's get on with our lives and ministries.

Well, this might work for a lot of Canadians, but Christians have to deal with another really inconvenient truth. For people of biblical faith, the luxury

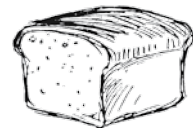
## Events Calendar

**October 13-15, 2011:** *Native Mennonite Ministries Council Meeting* (Clinton, Oklahoma)

**October 26-29, 2011:** *Atlantic National Event of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, (World Trade and Convention Centre, Halifax, Nova Scotia)

**April 13-23, 2012:** *CPT Aboriginal Justice Delegation to Kenora & Grassy Narrows*

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



### Pumpkin Cranberry Nut Bread

3/4 cup butter or margarine, softened  
2 cups sugar  
3 eggs  
1 (15 ounce) can solid pack pumpkin  
1 1/2 teaspoons grated orange peel  
3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour  
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1/2 teaspoon baking powder  
1 cup chopped walnuts  
1 cup chopped fresh or frozen cranberries

#### Directions

In a mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Add pumpkin and orange peel; mix well (mixture will appear curdled). Combine the flour, cinnamon, salt, baking soda and baking powder; add to pumpkin mixture, beating on low speed just until moistened. Fold in walnuts and cranberries. Pour into two greased 8-in. x 4-in. x 2-in. loaf pans. Bake at 350 degrees F for 65-75 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks.

of historical amnesia is consistently proscribed, indeed unequivocally prohibited. Take, for example, the simple exhortation that lies at the heart of the church's one universal ritual, the Eucharist/Lord's Supper: **Remember.** When we take both the bread and the cup, we repeat for emphasis the words Jesus left us with: "Do this in order to remember."

Whenever you eat or drink this, said Jesus on the eve of his execution, you are re-membering that which will soon be dis-membered: my Body, given for you. But let's not take these words out of their context in a story about a specific historical place and time. Jesus was giving a Passover homily, which is all about re-membering the long and continuing journey of his people from slavery and oppression. The Jews were deeply familiar with distress, displacement, and near-disappearance by one empire after another: Egypt, Babylon, Rome. Make no mistake: their consistent experience was much more akin to that of the Sto:lo people than to ours – removed from their beloved land, their rituals suppressed, treated as a despised minority.

We, on the other hand, are for the most part children of Pharaoh's household, citizens of Caesar's empire. We don't want to remember the blood that was spilled to build our privilege; we don't want to go into that forbidden forest. Oppressed people want to remember; oppressors want to forget.

But the reality is. . . Jesus was Sto:lo - a political refugee from birth, living on traditional lands that were militarily occupied by a colonial power, forced to speak another language, and impoverished by an economic system geared to benefit distant elites. Yet for all that, Jesus struggled hard to save his people from the twin fates of total assimilation or annihilation, and spoke truth to the Powers who were busily trying to dismember his people. And because of that, those Powers arrested him, convicted him of being a dissident native terrorist, and they broke his body on their executioner's cross, just as he had anticipated. But they couldn't keep him dead, or kill the memory of his liberation movement.

So what will we be remembering

when we take communion on Sunday? Jesus' exhortation at the last Supper sums up the deep wisdom of the entire biblical tradition: liberation begins with memory. To participate in this ritual meal is to ingest that memory, and thus to join ourselves to the historic struggle for wholeness that began in an Exodus march to freedom, culminated in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, and continues whenever we re-member all that has been dis-membered by empire and hubris and sin, not least right here in Mission, B.C.

This is why this Festival began by recognizing Sto:lo elders, and following protocol of being welcomed onto this land. And it is why tomorrow Elaine Enns will be offering a workshop on restorative justice and the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I pray each and every one of you and your church communities will learn about this national re-membering process, participate in and promote it, in order to bring healing to the broken body of Canada. It would be easy for you as people of relative privilege to ignore the process, or simply lament what happened in the past to poor indigenous people, but finally to dismiss it as "not your issue." But Jesus asks us to "take and eat" the work of re-membering, to internalize the stories of dismemberment, and to take responsibility for healing. This legacy is "hard to swallow," it's "a lot to stomach." But this is what communion requires.

Let us journey then into the haunted forest of our history, so that our churches can become spaces where those difficult stories can be aired in order that healing can begin. There is an old Sto:lo saying: "The ancestor of everything is an action." That's their way of reminding us that practice takes precedence over mere thinking or rhetoric. So when you go home, will you make a commitment to put yourself in the company of those seeking justice and healing for First Nations, and of those experimenting with how to truly address the "settler problem"? Because our healing is tied to theirs. And Creative World Justice begins right here.

*Ched Myers*





Photos provided by Grace Mennonite Church.

# Meeting a Beautiful People: Camping in Pauingassi

Sixteen people from Grace Mennonite Church, Steinbach, MB left on a Monday morning in August for the three hour drive to Pine Dock. From there, we were to take three float planes to Pauingassi. As we waited for our flight, we chatted about some of the unknowns we might experience during the week. Some of us were a little anxious. But any apprehensions we had quickly passed when we arrived at the camp.

Our day went sort of like this. Up for prayers and breakfast and ready for the children by 9:30ish (by the way, did you know “ish” is a part of the 24 hour clock?). We were ready for the kids by 9:30, but it all depended on the weather for when they arrived. Similarly, the departure time of 8:30 ended up being close to 7:30. Luckily everyone was very adaptable! After morning activities, lunch would be served and then more activities for the kids. Homemade cookies were the snack of the week, then came supervised free time, followed by supper!

Throughout the day the pontoon boat kept coming in with more aunts, uncles, grandmas and grandpas of the kids that were participating in the camp. More to love and serve! We sang songs around the fire in the evening and could share what we were thankful for that day. Then we would have a staff meeting as the families would ready

themselves for bed. During staff meetings, we each gave a highlight of the day and then planned for the next day with lots of wiggle room for change! Weather was a big factor for change of plans – one day it rained all day, the next day we had winds of 40 miles per hour so the activities had to be slightly altered. Despite it all everyone smiled and had fun.

A few lessons learned and highlights from the week include:

- All kids love to laugh and giggle and be hugged. . . whether it was the children from Pauingassi that attended the camp or the Grace kids that were camp counselors.

- Bannock is incredibly delicious when lovingly made by the native ladies for our meals, and even better when stuffed with wieners and cheese!

- As the week went on we became more comfortable with each other. Thursday’s good weather brought many people into the water including a couple of the women who surprised one of the staff by throwing him into the water!

- Fish drown! – we had the opportunity to go check the nets that had been set out in the lake. When the fish get caught in the net, they drown and die.

Don’t you love learning something new every day!

- The opportunity to experience a sweat lodge and what it represents for Ojibwe culture was a first. It was surprising that for many members of the community it was also a new experience, so it was a chance to learn together.

- Washing dishes in the lake and

**All kids love to laugh and giggle and be hugged. . . whether it was the children from Pauingassi that attended the camp or the Grace kids that were camp counselors.**

scrubbing them with sand is a very efficient method to getting that grime off the pots and pans.

- Cooking over a camp fire is slow but ever so tasty.

- Baths in the lake at 7AM are quite pleasant when you know that there is nothing else available.

- Eric Kennedy, who works for Child and Family Services, was one of the main people to initiate this journey. He is a man who believes in his people and hopes that by engaging in this partnership with Pauingassi, some hope



will be brought to the adults and children who came to this camp upon their return to their community.

- Your heart hurts when a 10 year old tells you that his mother hung herself last month, but it is all OK now because a month is a long time ago.
- The opportunity to learn stories of the community members despite the fact

that they often faced harsh realities.

- Just sitting and just being is OK. There isn't always a need for talk.
- Too much sun for white people makes us red and too much sun for natives makes them more brown, according to 8 year old Zac!
- Aboriginals' sense of humor is full of one-liners that leave you howling.

Saying "Goodbye" is hard, but made a little easier by the knowledge that we will see our new friends again throughout the next few years. As we looked out the window during take-off we realized we had been blessed to meet and begin relationships with a truly beautiful people.

*Simone Penner, Sarah Pries, Becca Letkemen and James Barkman*

## Jesus Camp in Carrier Country

For the past three years, a group of eight teenagers, our Youth Pastor, and I have traveled more than 1,000 kilometers from our home-town of Chilliwack in the Fraser Valley, to a remote town in central BC called Granisle. It is here that we run a *Jesus Camp* for the local youth, spend time learning the indigenous history of this place, and interact with those living on the reserve of Tachet, just out of town. Though some might call this a 'missions trip', we purposely don't call it that because we go with the primary intent of learning and growing together in relationships.

Granisle and Tachet are small places, and some say they are in the middle of nowhere. But I have come to love these places and the people – especially the children. They are so unique and yet so similar to me in many ways. They have the same desire to be loved unconditionally and the same need for stability and acceptance, just like those back home. By playing games, creating crafts, discussing faith, and eating together, I have come to realize that these youth are my sisters and brothers in Christ, and I have a responsibility to treat them just as I would treat others of the same race as me. When I am back home in Chilliwack, I stay in regular contact with my Tachet friends using Facebook and the Internet, which carries me through the year until I am finally able to give high-5's, real hugs and face-to-face talk the next summer.

I will never forget the day we were hanging out with the kids during Camp and we received the news that one of the teens on the reservation had tragically died the night before.

The Tachet kids were all deeply upset. Although none of us on the team had ever met the young man who passed away, we all were profoundly hit by their grief, and we mourned with them in their loss. It was through this difficult time that we had the opportunity to give and receive Christ's love to one another, and experience first-hand the difficulties that many indigenous people endure living on their reserves.

I have come to better understand and embrace a different way of life by being with my native neighbors, and learning some of their story. My heart has broken as I have been taught the burden of past injustice that they have to live with. I believe that by educating ourselves and by making a conscious effort to build healthy and lasting relationships with our host peoples, we will grow closer to our Creator and learn to truly love one another, as Christ has called us to do.



*Leah Snelgrove and friend Tiffany*

*Leah Snelgrove, Chilliwack, BC*



# 8<sup>th</sup> Annual NAIITS Symposium: Exploring Indigenous Ways of Knowing

Several months ago, while shopping at our local grocery store, I saw a bumper sticker that read, “It’s an INDIAN thing, you wouldn’t understand.” Yet as I attended the 8<sup>th</sup> Symposium on Native North American Theology and Mission at Ambrose Seminary (Calgary, June 9-11), I was given some hope; if I listen long enough, listen with care and respect, then one day I might actually understand.

In his paper, *Mitigating Missionary Autism: a Proposal for an Aboriginal Cure*, Adrian Jacobs describes a gathering of primarily white missionaries in which one of them says, “I’ve worked for twenty-five years among these Indians and I STILL don’t understand them.” This sentiment was echoed over lunch when I visited with Vincent Yellow Old Woman, former pastor and present council member of the Siksika Nation near Gleichen, Alberta. He talked about how missionary after missionary would come to the Siksika Nation, attempt to build a church, get frustrated, and then leave. What was the problem? *In all these efforts, little was done to try and understand the culture and people.*

Unfortunately, this is typical of what has taken place in Christian mission amongst the indigenous since Europeans came to this land. And that’s why the work of NAIITS is so important - to articulate and advocate the way of Jesus within an authentic, Aboriginal context.

Of course, there are major difficulties to overcome in this journey. There are those in the western, Christian world, both First Nation and European, who claim that any spiritual practices remotely close to being traditionally Aboriginal, is pagan. At the other end, there are those in the native community that view any connection with Christianity as a denial of one’s true identity. “Christianity is a white man’s religion!” But the likes of Jacobs and others at this symposium, suggest there really is a third way that holds together ethnicity, culture and



Terry Leblanc, Vincent Yellow Old Woman, Andre Smith, Richard Twiss, Ray Aldred

faith in Christ. . . and that this way can bring salvation through a true koinonia partnership of western and indigenous Christians.

At the end of the gathering, Richard Twiss – a Rosebud Lakota – summarized the work of NAIITS as an attempt to decolonize (or “de-colon-ize”!) Christianity, and particularly, the Great Commission. Western missionary endeavours, said Twiss, have done more to expand the ways of empire and its philosophies of modernity than they have incarnated and proclaimed the Good News of Jesus. Jacobs seconded this. The disconnect between native and non-native, the “seemingly intractable problem of socio-cultural distance,” he said, is a result of “the Western way of thinking and processing.”

While this in no way captures the weekend, I feel privileged to have attended this symposium. It’s clear that there is much pain in the history of this land and its present relationships. But there is also much hope. . . if we listen. And so I close with these words from Adrian Jacobs.

*“I am your peer and I deserve your ear. I am your peer and I deserve your heart. I am your peer and I will continue to patiently wait for you to get it, to finally read my social cues, to stop violating my dignity and not even see what you are doing. One day you will get it. One day you will read my social cues. You will see the tear in my eye before it falls. You will hear the ache of my heart before you understand. You will listen to my story until you are reduced to a puddle of tears. You will stay there until God resurrects you. One day you will find yourself standing up and you will look to your right and you will see me. You will look to your left and you will see me. You will be holding my hands and finally we will be one brotherhood, one family under God. Not with you as my superior. Not with you as my father, for there is but one Father. You will finally be my brother.”*

And when this happens, we will finally understand.

Ryan Siemens, Pastor and  
Vice-Moderator  
Mennonite Church Saskatchewan,  
Prince Albert, SK



# The Six Nations and My Mennonite Ancestors

This past June, at the Mennonite Church Canada Assembly in Waterloo, I had opportunity to participate in the Six Nations Learning Tour. It was a powerful experience. Personally, the most compelling and unsettling insight was that some Native Peoples live in Ontario today because they fled there from my home area on the east coast of the United States.

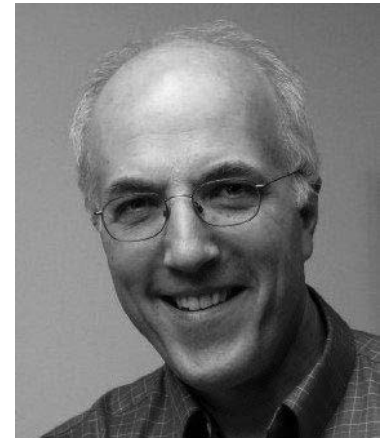
My earliest Kraybill ancestor came to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in 1754. He and other Mennonites were escaping harassment against Anabaptists in Europe, and I learned as a child that Mennonite emigration to America was a courageous act of conscience. What I did not learn is something that should have been obvious: my forebears settled on farmland in Pennsylvania that Native Peoples had inhabited for centuries or millennia. Regardless of whether or not the Native Peoples now in Ontario came from my exact home area in the United States, the historical fact that I must absorb is that I was raised on land taken from others.

Yes, my ancestors were pacifist Mennonites. No, they were not part of the militia that removed or killed native peoples. But my forebears in Pennsylvania and Indiana did reap benefits from European aggression, moving in and homesteading native land as soon as others had cleared the way. From the perspective of native peoples who once inhabited much of North America, invading Europeans in the eighteenth and

nineteenth centuries were illegal immigrants, perhaps even thieves.

It is questionable how much the sins of past generations can be reversed or corrected. It's disheartening to see how much (European immigrant) development has happened in Ontario and Lancaster. *How could all that land ever be properly restored to native peoples?*

But at minimum, people of conscience today must learn the history of what happened in the past, and take whatever steps possible to address wrongs done by us or our forebears. We must learn from the past so we can demonstrate tangible respect to today's indigenous peoples, to ensure that we don't repeat the injustices of the past or silently enjoy unjust privileges.



Nelson Kraybill

Nelson Kraybill, Pastor of Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Elkhart, IN

Provided by Eric Olfert



Patrick Preheim, Pastor at Nutana Park Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, chats with Hereditary Chief of the Young Chipewyan First Nation, George Kingfisher.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Spruce River Folk Festival

The Second Annual Spruce River Folk Festival was deliberately planned to occur earlier in the day than last year's rather chilly event. God gave a blessing and it was a beautiful warm, sunny day and a wonderful experience. An interesting mix of Mennonites (Grace Mennonite Church-Prince Albert, SK, Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan and Mennonite Church Saskatchewan were the sponsors), community folks and First Nations people talked, ate and enjoyed the music and farm setting.

Nine Saskatchewan groups and individuals played and sang in a variety of styles, to an audience that numbered about 120 at its peak, but with a total of at least 150 passing through. Foods ranged from the classic hot dogs and hamburgers to Rollkuchen and watermelon, curried Chickpeas and rice to bannock and soup. Warm conversations, warm food, warm sun and great music. What more could you want!

This event is a fundraiser for the Young Chipewyan Genealogical Project and through entry fees, food sales, silent auction and contributions, a total of about \$4300 was raised. A recent report from the Mohawk genealogist working on this project is quite hopeful that a strong case can be made for the Young Chipewyan First Nation's ongoing legitimacy and thus for their land claim. We hope that by next year we can together celebrate movement forward on finding our Young Chipewyan brothers and sisters a new home!

Eric Olfert,  
Mennonite Church Saskatchewan



*Richard Twiss, a featured speaker at the conference*



*Carmen Lansdowne, featured speaker at the conference, is aided by her son!*

## Can You Hear the Drum?

This past May, the Churches Council on Theological Education (CCTE) hosted a second annual conference on indigenous spiritualities and theological education at the University of Winnipeg called, “Can You Hear the Drum?”. There were about 80 participants, many of them older church leaders, but also a number of younger theological students. About half of the participants were First Nations, and the non-indigenous participants included people of Papuan, Philippine, Korean, and European origin. Interestingly, and importantly, there was a healthy diversity of church expressions present – mainline and evangelical, conservative and liberal.

After a powerful opening ceremony of indigenous worship involving the drum and a sacred fire, Richard Twiss gave the keynote address. Twiss is a Lakota from South Dakota, the co-founder of Wiconi International, and board member of the North American Institute of Indigenous Theological Studies. Even though he has a doctorate in theology, his communication remained accessible and highly entertaining. His lecture focused on the question of what it means to be human, and how important it is for indigenized Christianity to be doing its own theology. As Twiss shared he had the audience laughing and crying. I particular enjoyed the beautiful Lakota picture of “Creator with us” that he offered up, and that Lakota life is

to be lived as an expression of gratitude, with ceremonies and cultural practices that help shape that attitude. With many personal anecdotes, Twiss explained how that striving for a balanced, grateful life has been disrupted through the injustice indigenous peoples have encountered as they seek to survive and thrive under the pressures of dominant North American society. Living well under such a society involves becoming aware of the injustice, crying out in anger, being heard and then being freed to move forward. His retelling of the story of Jesus as an indigenous, dark skinned person was a wonderful example of this moving forward. It was healing for many indigenous conference participants, and healing too - in a prophetic, challenging sense - for those of us who are part of that dominant society.

The Rev. Carmen Lansdowne was the other Keynote speaker. Lansdowne is a young Heitsik woman from the central coast of British Columbia and an ordained minister in the United Church of Canada. In that latter role she serves on the Central and Executive Committees of the World Council of Churches, while pursuing doctoral studies in Interdisciplinary Studies at the Graduate Theological Union and teaching at the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University.

Her fast paced academic presentation echoed a number of Twiss’s themes;

what being human looks like from an indigenous vantage point, the need to name and to confront injustice as part of the path towards a restoration of balanced living, and the connections between healing and real native sovereignty. When challenged by one participant to put politics aside and summarize Indigenous spirituality she replied, “Our spirituality is hard to define because it doesn’t rest in creeds or doctrines. Our spirituality is based on living in balance in an abundant world, gifted to us by a generous Creator. We need to be political because injustice has led to our living so out of balance. This is why I always put justice issues first in my presentations.”

Finally, Lansdowne challenged non-indigenous participants to faithfully walk with the native community, to not get paralyzed, to not give up, to persevere and pursue a costly reconciliation with the sure hope “that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:6).

I am very grateful that I was able to spend these meaningful days learning more about and from my indigenous brothers and sisters in Christ. Meg-witch.

*Elsie Rempel, Formation Consultant,  
Mennonite Church Canada*



# CPT Experience: Becoming Aware of Indigenous & White Realities

Going on a *Christian Peacemaker Team* (CPT) delegation isn't a typical holiday for those needing R&R. But with a break in the schedule, and a husband willing to go solo for twelve days with our kids, how could I resist? Moreover, as a Mom of one Sto:lo and one Nuu-chah-nulth daughter, I have much to learn about the lived realities faced by Indigenous people and this delegation seemed like it would be a great way to learn more. I wasn't disappointed.

Our first six days were spent in Treaty 3 Territory, where community members helped us engage the ways Grassy Narrows has been scarred by various forms of colonization; land relocation, mercury poisoning of lakes and river system, deforestation of traditional trapping lands, residential schools and the 60s scoop. It was sobering to say the least. When we moved on to Kenora, our learning was furthered as we spent time with folks involved in such areas as



*Grassy Narrows clear cut*

legal aid/justice, women's shelters and friendship centers. All together, we were provided a full picture of the systemic racism faced by the Anishinaabe, and more generally, by indigenous peoples throughout Canada.

All this learning, however, was not simply knowledge and fact based. It was profoundly experiential. Perhaps the most impactful experience was when Stephanie, CPT's Anishinaabe friend, gently led us through an "Undoing Racism Workshop" where we did a walk of white privilege – an activity to discern the ways we benefit as members of the dominant society through no merit of our own. Participants line up together, and a series of questions are asked one by one that explore systemic privilege (for instance, Can you look in mainstream media and see wide, fair representation of people who look like you?). If you can say "yes," then you take a step forward.

After fifteen questions, I had taken fifteen steps. Then I looked back and saw Stephanie on the starting line. She

hadn't moved. She hadn't been able to take a step. Through tears, all I could see was my daughters, who despite all that we can offer as parents, will still endure the reality of life as non-normative Native women, living in a dominant white society that too easily confesses 'colorblindness.' It was a God-given, sacramental moment. As a Mom, I knew in that moment that I was being called to a greater awareness of the principalities, and to find ways to disarm those deadly powers that divide and dispossess individuals and communities (*Ephesians 6*). And as a member of a Mennonite community that unabashedly preaches peace, I knew that we were being invited to do a peaceable work that we haven't done for the most part; to courageously confess our 'invisible' white privilege and nail it to the cross, so that our church might become a more just and hospitable place for everyone, especially the indigenous.

For more information on CPT visit [http://www.cpt.org/work/aboriginal\\_justice](http://www.cpt.org/work/aboriginal_justice)

*Ann Heinrichs, Winnipeg, MB*



*"Dancing the Way" youth from the Siksika Nation of Alberta participated in the Monday evening public gathering as well as during the conference.*

**Visit Mennonite Church Canada**  
[www.mennonitechurch.ca](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca)



# Meditation

## 3 of 7 Ojibway Sacred Teachings plus Scripture references (See *Intotemak* Summer 2011 issue for the first 4 sacred teachings)

◁σ∫αV<sup>b</sup> bbαCω<sup>α</sup> PPω◁L9·Δα<sup>α</sup>  
C d PPL<sup>α</sup>Δbσ<sup>x</sup> b▷∫ΛΔbU<sup>b</sup>

**Wisdom:** It is to be discovered on your journey through life, in a wildflower, in the face and words of an elder. If you listen you will hear it in every sound. If you look you will see it in all things!

*For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict.* Luke 21:15; Ephesians 1:17; Ecclesiastes 8:1.

**ḅḆC·∇CJ·Δ<sup>α</sup>:** ΔαU PΓPbU<sup>b</sup> ∇◁◁Γ◁∫<sup>α</sup>, b<sup>4</sup> Λ·bL<sup>b</sup>Δ Pωb<sup>α</sup> ·◁Λ·b<sup>α</sup>  
bα·◁◁CL<sup>α</sup>, b<sup>4</sup> ·◁◁L<sup>b</sup> 9U<sup>b</sup>∫<sup>α</sup> ∇bP<sup>α</sup> ΛPCL<sup>α</sup> Γ Γ<sup>α</sup>·∇ CωC·b<sup>α</sup> ·∇·∇σ  
ΔαΛ<sup>α</sup> Γ<sup>α</sup>·∇ b<sup>4</sup> Cα·b<sup>α</sup>  
σ<sup>α</sup> ∫ Ad P<sup>b</sup> Γσσσ<sup>α</sup> ΔP<sup>α</sup>·Δα<sup>α</sup>, ḅḆC·∇CJ·Δ<sup>α</sup> b<sup>4</sup> b·Δ C<sup>α</sup> ▷bb<sup>α</sup>∫P<sup>α</sup>·◁<sup>α</sup>  
ΔP b<sup>α</sup>∫9σΓ·b P◁◁ΓC<sup>α</sup>·b ∇P<sup>α</sup>∫<sup>b</sup>, b·Δ<sup>α</sup> P<sup>b</sup> ∫d<sup>α</sup>Γd<sup>α</sup>·◁<sup>b</sup> ∫▷<sup>b</sup> 21:15;  
ΔΛ∫<sup>α</sup>·b 1:17; ḅP9C<sup>α</sup> 8:1<sub>x</sub>

**Bravery/Courage:** Let the Great Spirit bless us with the courage to keep the circle strong and free. Never give in. Never give up.

*Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.* 1 Corinthians 16:13, 14; Acts 4:13; Psalm 121:5, 7.

**ḆPU∇·Δ<sup>α</sup>:** Lω Lσ<sup>α</sup> ∫·∇σΓ∫α<sup>α</sup> P▷P<sup>α</sup>PU∇<sup>α</sup> ∇ ·◁·Δb◁·Δ<sup>α</sup> ∇b ·Δb  
P◁PUC<sup>α</sup>·◁<sup>α</sup> ∇b b<sup>4</sup> ·Δb ◁P<sup>α</sup>·◁<sup>α</sup>  
◁∫·◁Λ<sup>α</sup>, L<sup>α</sup>·Δb◁·Δ<sup>α</sup> U·VCL·Δσ<sup>x</sup>, ◁◁σ P<sup>α</sup> Δσσ·Δ<sup>α</sup> L<sup>α</sup>·Δ<sup>α</sup>!  
ḅPα 9d<sup>α</sup> ∫PΔ<sup>α</sup>·Δσ<sup>x</sup> Δ∫C<sup>α</sup> 1 b<sup>3</sup>Δ∫α<sup>b</sup> 16:13-14; Δ∫P9·Δα<sup>α</sup> 4:13;  
σb<sup>α</sup> 121:5, 7<sub>x</sub>

**Truth:** Understand it, speak it, live by it, and you will feel its power.  
*Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue lasts only a moment.*

Proverbs 12:19; Ephesians 4:25; John 8:31-32.

**U·V·Δ<sup>α</sup>:** b·9 σ<sup>α</sup>∫C<sup>α</sup>, ḅP<sup>α</sup>, Γα Γ ∇∫ ΛL∫<sup>α</sup> Γ<sup>α</sup> P<sup>b</sup> ∫∫<sup>α</sup> ∇∫ L<sup>α</sup>·Δ<sup>α</sup>·L<sup>b</sup>  
U·V·Δ<sup>α</sup>  
P·◁σ<sup>α</sup>·Δ<sup>α</sup> Δ<sup>α</sup> ◁∫α ∇C C◁∫L<sup>b</sup>, U·V·Δ<sup>α</sup> ΔC<sup>α</sup> σ<sup>α</sup>·L<sup>b</sup> C◁∫L<sup>b</sup>  
ḅḆC·ΔP·∫·Δα<sup>α</sup> 12:19; ΔΛ∫<sup>α</sup>·b 4:25; ·U<sup>α</sup> 8:31-32<sub>x</sub>



Publication Mail Agreement # 40012495  
Return undeliverable Canadian Addresses to:  
Intotemak  
Mennonite Church Canada c/o Native Ministry  
600 Shaftesbury Blvd. Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4

