

my friends Intotemak

Summer 2006 Vol. 35, No. 2



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Witness



How God Spoke to Me with a Drum

The Native drum has been a point of contention for ages. As I look back into my own history, I realize how handicapped I was as I entered the Native community. First of all, I had been led to believe that the drum could not be a part of the Christian faith. Secondly, as we lived in the Native community we only heard the drum combined with drinking. Drink had been one of the major reasons for the deterioration of ceremonies in the first place because the Elders felt drink could not mesh with the ceremonies. Eventually, however, drink took over and the ceremonies deteriorated.

Many people, both White and Native, have felt that the drum needs to be discarded. Others are uncertain. Then there are those that feel the drum is the instrument given to them by God because it represents the heartbeat of a person,
See Drum page 4



Eagles Nest

Listening and Learning

What a difference a week can make! We left Winnipeg one snow-covered winter morning and came back a week later to flooded fields in southern Manitoba. Spring arrived overnight! Resurrection happened all around us!

We celebrated the Easter season soon after that spring trip and were reminded once more how our Creator God wants to rejuvenate each of us emotionally, mentally, physically and spiritually each day through Jesus Christ. May we experience this resurrection in our lives so that we can further God's Kingdom around us.

We had an exciting spring and you will read about some of the activities we participated in on the pages of this magazine. For example,

- Neill participated in the Learning Circle events in Abbotsford, BC at the end of March. It was a good chance to meet more people in BC and learn what is happening as Mennonite and Aboriginal people share their stories with each other. We hope that such events can happen elsewhere in the future.

- Speaker Ray Aldred stressed that we as non-Native church people need to empower our Native brothers and sisters, rather than expect them to be carbon copies of our non-Native churches. All of us are learners and we need to meet Jesus at the point of our weakness.

- A ministry of reconciliation is so important, but it needs to be respectful and with a spirit of learning and walking alongside.

- The "Journey from Darlington" conference in Clinton, Oklahoma was a real highlight. Native Ministry Canada has had a close relationship over the years with our Southern Cheyenne brothers and sisters, and their story has become our story, also. It was a privilege to represent all of you at this conference.

A highlight was our field trip to the Washita Battlefield National Historic Site, where Black Kettle, a Cheyenne peace chief, was camped along the Washita River with his family and followers,

away from the main group of Cheyenne, the night that General George Armstrong Custer and the 7th Cavalry regiment of the United States Army descended on their small encampment. Here, Black Kettle and most of the people with him were killed, including women, babies and grandparents. Emotionally it was hard for most of us to be there and listen to the U.S. National Park Service ranger as he shared the story of Black Kettle's band with us as we walked in the valley to the site. With much emotion he reminded us that "This all happened to people - not to animals, as many in the society of that day considered Indians to be."

- Lawrence Hart, Cheyenne peace chief and Mennonite pastor, has been instrumental in making sure the Cheyenne story is being told and documented today for future generations. This includes the formation of the Cheyenne Cultural Center in Clinton, telling the story at the battle site and other projects on a national and local front.

Looking ahead:

- We are visiting the congregations at Matheson Island, Cross Lake and Manigotagan, Manitoba in May and June to transfer the ownership of the church property from Mennonite Church Canada to the local congregation.

- We want to meet many of you at the Edmonton 2006 Assembly sessions of Mennonite Church Canada congregations in early July.

- We are chartering a bus to travel to Native Assembly 2006 in Atmore, Alabama at the end of July. There are still seats available so please call or e-mail the Native Ministry office as soon as possible to get a registration form and more details.

That is all we have for now. Migwetch.

Neill and Edith

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



my friends **Intotemak**

Publication # 40010288

June Summer 2006 Vol. 35, No. 2

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

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Printed by Christian Press

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Subscription information

\$12.00 a year for four issues
(cost includes applicable taxes).
Send payment (cheques payable)
to Mennonite Church Canada /
Native Ministry

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.



Listening Circle brings together two cultures

Native frybread (bannock) and traditional German Mennonite *platz*, a sweet fruit desert, were both on the menu when Christians of both European and Native origin gathered for a "Two-evening listening circle with aboriginal people." Mennonite Church Canada Native Ministries and Mennonite Central Committee B.C. Aboriginal Neighbours co-sponsored the March 28-29 events.

About 90 people formed a circle -- very important in Native culture -- in the Emmanuel Mennonite Church gymnasium in Abbotsford the first evening to hear theologian Ray Aldred speak. Aldred, of the Swan River Cree Band in Alberta, spoke on the topic, "How can traditional spirituality and understanding be fulfilled in the gospel, or transformed by it, in the same way that European cultures interpreted the gospel into their context?" It was pointed out that, in Native culture, the circle is very important.

Opening the evening, members of the Sto:lo Coqualeetza Elders group of Chilliwack presented a special welcome with songs. Aldred then addressed the group, telling of his experiencing Christianity as a Native person who wondered if the Gospel was just for white people, or if it could speak to him, too. "When the Gospel is shared, it must be in the heart language of the people," he concluded. "Instead of telling [people] how to be Christian," he asked, "how about just telling them the story?"

Also sharing that night was Mary Fontaine from the Mistawasis Cree Nation, who talked about various symbols in her culture that relate to faith and life. She also demonstrated traditional Native drumming.

Concluding the evening, participants partook of smoked salmon brought by some of the Native people and traditional Native and Mennonite treats.

The second

When the Gospel is shared, it must be in the heart language of the people.

evening, carver Eric Macpherson of the Giksan Nation near Hazelton showed some of his art and talked about the symbolism in it. "Being from an oral culture, there's no way to share stories without symbolism," he said. Ray Aldred also continued his talk.

Organizers hope that more such cross-cultural encounters, bringing together Christians of different cultures, will continue in the future.

—Amy Dueckman, Abbotsford, B.C.



Eric McPherson carving.



Eric McPherson, Ray Alfred, Mary Fontaine and Darryl Klassen.

Ipperwash Inquiry: Where's the truth?

Since 1993 the staff of Mennonite Central Committee Ontario (MCCO) has had the honour of walking with the people of Stoney Point in their struggles to achieve justice for themselves and their future generations.

As I sit in the community centre in Forest, Ontario, observing former Ontario Premier Mike Harris give testimony at the Ipperwash Inquiry, I sense in the room the frustration that we are not hearing the truth from the witness. Getting to the truth seems to be a lengthy and expensive process, but the greatest frustration is the amount of time and resources spent protecting the interests of a political system that seems unwilling to acknowledge the mistakes made and the resulting hurt.

If all parties were to acknowledge their part in a system that went wrong, we could begin to work together to bring healing and to prevent this kind of injustice from being repeated.

Perhaps the "truth" is that some were motivated by fear and by negative stereotyping, and tragedy resulted — a person was killed — unnecessarily. With Dudley's death many are grieving the loss of a friend, a brother, a son, an uncle. Along with this grieving comes a loss of trust. Fear and anger tend to take the place of trust. When we take ownership -- both personally and corporately -- for our part of the process, then we can start to rebuild trust. This opens the way for healing within individuals and allows for the building of better relationships. There have been some apologies made and I hope to see more as the Inquiry continues.

MCCO commends Commissioner Sidney Linden and the staff of the Inquiry for the work they are doing. The Inquiry has given people the opportunity to tell their stories, sometimes for the first time publicly, and that is part of the "truth" we are seeking. It also helps people to be more aware of the issues facing Aboriginal people. Not everyone is listening, but some of us are; and it gives us the opportunity to learn and to begin to better understand and relate to our Aboriginal brothers and sisters.

To read more about MCCO's involvement at Ipperwash, visit www.mcc.org/ontario/program/AboriginalNeighbours

—Don Procter, Kitchener, ON
MCC Ontario Aboriginal Neighbours
Coordinator for Southern Ontario

Mennonite Native Partners meet in Busby, Montana

We were welcomed with the warm greetings, smiles and welcoming hearts of our sisters and brothers in Christ and culture.

Sixteen representatives from Native congregations in the USA and Canada met in Busby, Montana, March 24-25, 2006. High on the agenda was the planning of the 2006 Native Assembly, July 24-27, in Atmore, Alabama.

The White River Cheyenne Mennonite Church community in Busby was a wonderful host for the gathering. We were welcomed with the warm greetings, smiles and welcoming hearts of our sisters and brothers in Christ and culture. They invited us to sleep in their homes, and fed us very satisfying and tasty meals. One of those meals was a traditional Northern Cheyenne meal including pemmican, a wonderful dried meat. They were also able to greet us with sunny skies and +10 C temperatures.

Native Ministry, Mennonite

Church Canada Witness, was represented by Barb Daniels and Emily Collins of the Riverton Fellowship Circle.

This was the third gathering since the official beginning of Native Mennonite Ministries, the Mennonite Church USA Native Constituency group which began February 1, 2005. Nine congregations were represented at this meeting. A number of other congregations continue to consider membership in the organization.

The groups from Canada and the USA continue to learn how to partner across the border. While we have much creative work that can yet be done in our relationship, we are excited about the biennial gathering or Native Assembly event, which is the main feature of our partnership.

This year the Creek folks

from near Atmore, Alabama will be hosting us. Many of you will already have heard of the event. The theme is "We are One in the Spirit." The main speakers include Howard Jolly, who also spoke in Riverton in the summer of 2004. The worship will be the foundation of what we do together. There is programming for youth and children, along with many interesting and helpful seminars, and lots of activities and free time to get talk to old friends and make new ones.

The March meetings in Busby also included such topics as the need for leadership development for our congregations; budget discussions and the need for fundraising; and some questions around staffing needs and design. At this time NMM is in a strong position financially but,

due to changes in funding from Mennonite Mission Network, we will need to raise money for operations and Mennonite Mission Network will continue to fund special projects. Native Ministry in Canada continues to strengthen itself through partnerships with Mennonite congregations in their area.

Some people stayed in Montana through Sunday and contributed to the local worship services in Lame Deer and Ashland. We all left the meetings with a strong sense of much work ahead, but that God's Spirit will walk with us in the challenges we face to strengthen our ministry, relationships and structures.

—Miles Reimer,
Newton, Kansas

Native Mennonite Ministries

Drum

Continued from page 1

a nation. I have heard all of these ideas expressed over the years. I have also seen devout adherents to the Christian faith using the drum to sing praises to God, our Creator. This has become very appealing to me as I have searched out an honest position of my own over the years. I would like to share a part of my pilgrimage in this area of discerning, as it culminated in the following experience.

On April 14, 2005 I made my way to the Health Sciences Center in Winnipeg to check on some patients before my wife and I took a brief holiday. As usual, I first of all went to the office of the interpreters to see if they had any referrals to make. Seeing that the person I wanted to see was not in, I decided to make my way to the Spiritual Care Office to check a list there that is at my disposal. Just before leaving the interpreters' office I noticed an announcement on the board that there was to be the blessing of a Native hand drum within minutes of the time that I was reading about it. This was the first I had heard of it. The announce-

ment also requested that we make a reservation to attend because there would be a feast after the ceremony. Seeing I had not made a reservation, I felt I could not be involved.

Consequently, I left for the Spiritual Care Office, which was on the same floor. Just as I entered the office, the Director of Spiritual Care crossed in front of me to go to the chapel for this ceremony. I am well-known in the office so she heartily invited me to join them in the chapel. I heard her invitation, but hesitated because I had not made a reservation. At that moment Rita, a Native chaplain who often asks me to visit certain patients and with whom I have extensive contact regarding visiting patients, came in behind me. She, too, was on her way to the chapel. As the director had already done, Rita heartily invited me to join them for the ceremony. Hesitatingly I followed them. There were a number of people there that I had not seen before, and only a few that I was familiar with. After looking around, I sat down beside Rita.

The director soon introduced the Elder and her two daughters, who had made the drum. She also mentioned that it would not have

been possible five years ago to have this type of a ceremony blessing a drum which would be used in the hospital by the resident Elder with those patients that desired the same. Now, however, the climate was right, as well as the fact that there were times when up to 75% of the patients were of Native origin.

The Elder then talked about the drum -- that it was like the heartbeat of a person, thus being very significant in the healing process of a patient that might be in tune with the drum. After smudging the drum and praying a blessing on it so that it might be used to the honor of God and the welfare of the patients, she passed it to the resident Elder of the hospital to sing her first song.

After her song, the Elder then handed the drum to Sakoieta (Terry) Widrick to sing his song. I did not think that this had been a part of the scheduled program. Sakoieta works at the hospital under the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority. He first of all expressed his apology that he was not an Elder like the person that had made the drum, as well as the other person that was sitting on the other side of the room (meaning me). He then com-

menced to sing his song. Having completed his song, he looked at me and said, "Henry, you are next." Rita whispered one word to me, "Maacaan", meaning, "Go!"

With joy I stepped onto the platform and said that I had a song to sing, but that I had never sung it with a drum because I did not own a drum. I further explained that the song had been written by Elizabeth McBride of Wisconsin, USA, and that it was called "One Sat Alone Beside the Highway Begging." I then sang the song in Saulteaux...

Kaakakiipiinkwec kii'namatapi
Ciikihkana
e' antotamaakec
e' waapihsik
ehpami'itsohpan.

Aapitink itahsh okiihpiwaapamikon
ini Ciisahsoon
kii'onciminawaankos itahsh
ekii'aancihtoonic otishiyaawin.

Once a blind man he was sitting there
By the wayside
For he was begging
He could not see
To take care of his own needs.

But one day it happened Jesus
came along there
And saw him as he was
And that day he received much happiness
Jesus made a change
In his way of living.

Later on someone said, "You were meant to be here!" This was very humbling. I could not help but feel the same way. For years I have been searching for clarification in the use of the drum. Now enlightenment seemed to be taking place in a special way. An analogy from the book of Acts came to my mind, namely, where Peter and Cornelius were brought together by the leading of God's Spirit. Jews and Gentiles had nothing to do with each other, which made Peter hesitate at first to meet the Gentiles. At that point the Spirit said to him, "Listen! Three men are here looking for you. So get ready and go down, and do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them." Now, through this special illumination from above, they were brought together with God's stamp of approval on their gathering, and recognized each other as children of the same Creator.

For years and years the drum has been

condemned by the church in general as being out of bounds. On this occasion I felt I was brought into the Spiritual Care office at the split-second when the director was going to the ceremony so that I would be invited to be present. Rita's "maacaan," was also an encouragement from the Spirit, through Rita, for me to participate with joy. How could one say no to such leading of the Spirit? Who would have thought that I would then be asked to contribute a song in the language of the people, the language that God saw fit for me to acquire.

I also recalled a time years ago when the late Spoot Owen, one of the Elders of the Pauingassi church, stated the following when discussing some traditional things: "I never thought that everything of the past was wrong." That comment fit so well for this occasion. I felt richly blessed to have been given this affirmation from above. I felt such a glowing warmth within me as I went home that day, for it felt as though God's words to Peter were repeated to me that day, "So get ready and go down, and do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."

On September 9, 2005, at the annual Native Family Campout in Manigotogan, Billy Meade and I were sharing around the open campfire. He was open about sharing some traditional things he had experienced, and then I shared the above experience about the drum with him. We both acknowledged a mutual understanding of each other in the things that we had experienced. He requested the words and the music of the song I had sung that day in the hospital so that he, too, could learn the same. His last comment was, "When your time comes, you will receive a drum!"

At some point I talked with Sakoieta Widrick about the possibility of getting a drum made. He mentioned a number of people that were making them and that he also made one at times. I asked him to make me one as he would see fit and I, in turn, would then make him something.

In October my wife Elna and I paid a visit to Cross Lake. As we visited the home of Herman and Lydia, Lydia mentioned several times how much help I had been to them in their marriage. At that time Herman was out hunting for ducks and moose because they were planning a feast for the next day, when they wanted to renew their vows after 25 years of married life.

In the course of the conversation, Lydia mentioned something about her totem, which is bear, as well as other traditional experiences. I then shared with her my experience at Health Sciences Center regarding the

drum. As soon as I mentioned that I had sung that song without the use of a drum, she went to the back room and brought out her drum so that I could sing the song for her. What a joy it was to share this with the use of her drum. Later, as we were about to leave, she again expressed her thanks for all the help I had been to them and, at the same time, handed me the drum, saying, "I want to give you this drum to use, and I will get myself another one." This was most overwhelming!! The words of Billy just a month earlier suddenly became reality, "When your time comes, you will receive a drum."

I sent a copy of my story to Rita Flett and she responded, "It brought joy to my heart and I strongly feel that the Creator wants you to share this story to others. Our nation needs healing, and our people need affirmation of our many gifts that we have lost along the way. Our Creator Manitoo will give you guidance on how your drum will bring healing to our people and your people so I encourage you "MAACAN". (Go!)

On February 15, 2006, I took my drum along to visit Ociip (David Owen of Pauingassi, the last living ordained minister of the Pauingassi church) at the Winnipeg hotel where he is now living due to health problems. I had introduced him to the story of Peter and Cornelius as well as the drum ceremony that took place at the hospital last April so I asked David to read Acts 10 and we talked about the events of the time and compared it to the experience at the hospital. He was very open to my singing the song, "Then Jesus Came" as well as "There Is A Happy Land." He was very touched by this as he said he had never heard the drum being used to sing gospel songs.

David livened up a great deal as I sang and he commented on the beautiful sound of the drum. I wondered if it was in order to lay hands on the drum and dedicate it to the use of singing for the Lord. David was very eager to do that. What a wonderful experience it was to hear him pray for the use of the drum in this way while laying both his hands on it. I also had one hand on the drum and prayed a prayer of dedication for the drum as well as myself as I use it to sing for the Lord. I left his hotel room very light-footed, praising the Lord for the positive experience.

I am indeed grateful for the enlightenment given to me, as well as the gift of the drum, and want to use it to bring honor and glory to God's name as I sing for Him. I am indeed grateful to be able to sing in Saulteaux, Cree, English and German.

—Henry Neufeld, Winnipeg, MB

Bridging the Gap

Vision seeks multicultural worship

Marvin Baergen, one of Mennonite Church Canada's Missional Formation and Partnership Facilitators, works with the Mennonite Church Alberta missions committee and area congregations. Here he interviews Todd Munro of the Siksika Nation about an exciting dream of his that is coming true.

(Marv) *Tell us some things about yourself, your family, your community, your work and your faith and church involvements.*

(Todd) I have been married to Simone for 18 years. We have two children, John aged 15 and Nicole aged 17. We have lived on the Siksika Nation, about 100 kilometers east of Calgary, all our lives. I am a cattle rancher and also operate a bobcat service on the side.

I came to the Lord in March 1989. I grew up in the Roman Catholic tradition, but was not actively a part of the church and did not have a personal relationship with Jesus. After we were married, Simone (who had become a believer as a teenager) and her brothers shared the Gospel with me. I was a "hard nut" to crack. One day in March I started reading the Bible and all of a sudden it "just hit me." I felt like the air just left my body. From that day on the power of the Holy Spirit took over. I have never looked back (except to correct what I messed up earlier). I sometimes use the image of a wild horse to describe my coming to the Lord. You can get a wild horse close to a corral, but just as you think he's going in he breaks away and you have to start all over again. Once you finally get him in, he is won over. Today you can say that wild horse is in the barn and eating oats (which is the Word) right out of the Master's hand.

Following my conversion I immediately became involved in Siksika Fellowship church. There were only women in attendance and they thought the leader should be a man so before long I was asked to give leadership to the group. I remember my initial feeling of total inadequacy and helplessness. I did this for thirteen years off and on and full time for a period of four months at the end. I always felt that God had a greater calling for me and being where I was wasn't it. God seemed to be telling me "you're a rocket scientist working in a ditch." That's when I realized that God had something great planned ahead. In earlier years I had a problem with alcohol. I quit drinking "cold turkey" in 1986, when I

finally recognized it as a problem. Since then I have seen God's hand in this "pre-conversion" decision. I see that God got me sober so I could meet Simone and be ready to be introduced to the Lord and be used by Him.

(Marv) *What is "Bridging the Gap"? How and when and where and why did it come to be? What are your long-term hopes and dreams for this ministry?*

(Todd) Martin Luther King had a dream. I had a vision to bring people of all racial groups together to thank the Lord and worship him together. Simone and I had gone to Christian Fest (an open-air festival featuring well-known Christian artists and speakers) in Washington State a number of years ago, and I was so impressed and moved by the experience. Right away I said to Simone, "We should do this back home". I immediately felt that I wanted to take it one step further and to include people of all races. At first Simone wasn't too excited about the idea. She immediately saw all the work involved in organizing and hosting the event so it took some convincing that it would not be left entirely to her.

In January 2004 we put our vision into action. The first thing I did was to gather church support. Almost immediately I found six churches interested in this ministry idea. The number has now grown to nine churches/organizations. Rosemary Mennonite Church and Duchess Mennonite Church are two Mennonite churches involved. Others include Bassano and Brooks Evangelical churches, Strathmore Hope Community and Full Gospel churches, Calgary and Lethbridge Native Bible Fellowship churches, and Siksika Christian Fellowship Church. I see "Bridging the Gap" like the hub of a wheel from which spokes reach out to new ministries. One spoke, for example, is Christian Sisters of the Nation. This is a women-only gathering that proclaims that "Jesus is Lord" with passion and joy by singing and personal testimonies. And, there are other spokes in the works.

My vision is to get people of all cultures together to worship together. Initially I hoped for a gathering of 10,000 people in ten years. We have a way to go to reach that goal but I'm committed to this ministry for the long haul. The support we are looking for from our partner churches includes volunteering, praying, helping with finances, and to be a builder of "Bridging the Gap." We have received great

"The support we are looking for from our partner churches includes volunteering, praying, helping with finances, and to be a builder of 'Bridging the Gap'"

support. Even people not involved in churches want to help. Our ultimate goal is to build a worship centre we will call "Bridging the Gap Worship Centre".

(Marv) *What are some of the good things to come out of "Bridging the Gap," to this point?*

(Todd) I have seen relationships of families grow stronger. I have seen a brother and sister who had not spoken in years be reconciled. I have seen people excited about "next year" and have heard other positive feedback as well.

I am convinced that we are moving in the right direction. There is no other way if we want peace with God. I certainly recognize we still have a way to go. If you look closely, there is an invisible brick wall around Siksika Nation that has a racist or derogatory remark written on both sides. I also strongly believe that as Christians we should do all we can to bring this wall down one brick at a time.

(Marv) *What can you tell us about this summer's event? When is it happening? Who do you expect to attend? What events or program could people expect to see?*

(Todd) The event takes place August 26-27, 2006. Our symbol is a slanted cross with four hands holding it, each painted black, white, yellow, and red representing the colors of the nations.

We hope to have a number of musical groups, such as Gospel Light, as well as other Native and non-Native groups coming. There will be a children's ministry provided as well. Adolph Kootney, a former Medicine Man, will be sharing his testimony. Vernon Grant from BC, who served us last year, is returning to give

Pastors Face Racism

Monica Goulet knows firsthand what it's like to encounter racism. And she knows how much it hurts.

"I've been called a 'dirty squaw'", she says.

She's also experienced pronounced job-related discrimination because of her coloring and background.

"I've been a victim before and I will never be one again," she says.

Goulet, Saskatoon's Cultural Diversity and

the main message again. We expect testimonies from two non-Native people and two Native people. One is a band councilor, Horace Bull Bear.

Our hope is that this will be a place to forgive and be forgiven, as well as a place to heal our broken spirits and to make Jesus Christ the Lord of our lives. When all is said and done, the glory belongs to God.

The question we have all asked ourselves is "what will happen to me when I die?" If you are reading this, then you must be alive and you have an excellent opportunity to find out. I guarantee you will be challenged as this festival is a life-changing experience and He will change our life if you let Him.

(Marv) *What should we bring with us? What is the cost of the event? Do we have to register in advance? How would we do that?*

(Todd) Bring your tent or travel trailer and lawn chairs, as seating is limited. Meals are already paid for. There will be a free will offering to help defray some costs of the event. There is no cost for registration, but it will help with our planning if you give us a call to let us know you are coming.

(Marv) *How do we get to "Heaven's Gate Ranch"?*

(Todd) You take Highway 1 to the junction with Highway 56 (about 18 kilometers west of Brooks – and about one hour east of Calgary). You go south on Highway 56 for about 8 kilometers (You get to cross a ferry!) and then one kilometer east. Signs will be posted.

(Marv) *For further questions or inquiries, how do we get hold of you?*

(Todd) Call Heaven's Gate Ranch at (403) 734-2434.

—Marvin Baergen, Calgary, AB

Race Relations Coordinator, was the resource person at a Mennonite Church Saskatchewan Pastor's Gathering at Hanley Mennonite Church on April 26, 2006. The day-long session, attended by 18 pastors and conference staff, took a hard and sometimes emotional look at the face of racism.

Racist attitudes that play out in jokes, comments made and attitudes expressed over certain news reports – usually on coffee row – are obvious to most pastors. Stereotypes that are subtly promoted by Mennonites include the idea that Indians are always drunk; they don't have to pay taxes; and they're trouble-makers.

Ray Friesen, pastor of Emmaus Mennonite, has no doubt it exists.

"Racism is present in MC Sask churches; I've seen it operate in several congregations I've been in," he said.

Before beginning her presentation Goulet, who comes from Cumberland House, SK, took time to hear from each participant.

Barry Lesser, pastor of Zoar Mennonite

"Racism is present in MC Sask churches; I've seen it operate in several congregations I've been in," Friesen said.

Church in Waldheim, admitted his church has had no contact with First Nations people.

"In our community there is no relationship to Aboriginal people," he said.

Garth Fisher, co-pastor of Fiske Mennonite and Herschel Ebenfeld Mennonite, mentioned an event that sparked further interest in the issues.

"I heard the Treaty Commissioner and it got me thinking," he responded.

In a recently released report by the City of Saskatoon, it was found that, of the 500 people who were surveyed from the city, two-thirds have "witnessed acts of racism toward others."

Goulet isn't surprised. Having a background in education, she sees that many of our attitudes are built into the educational system. We are programmed, she says, to slip unknowingly into roles of perpetrator and



Monica Goulet was the resource person at a Mennonite Church Saskatchewan Pastor's Gathering at Hanley Mennonite Church.

victim. And we resist these roles, she adds.

"The education system does not incorporate Aboriginal relationships," she said. And in their absence, we turn to news reports to shape our thinking about people and the gap widens.

A short video, detailing a racist incident based on real-life, headed for the heart of the issue. It showed a single mother taking her daughter to school on the bus while being subjected to humiliation by some teenage boys. One boy, in particular, taunted her again and again with racist slurs while other people said nothing in her defense. The video produced somber reflection in the group. Goulet initiated a Sharing Circle and gave participants a chance to air their response.

"I recognize wisps of myself in the story," said Ed Olfert, pastor of Grace Mennonite in Prince Albert.

"I wanted to punch him," admitted Anna Rehan.

—Karin Fehderau, Saskatoon, SK
Text reprinted with permission from Canadian Mennonite

"We should all take a lesson from Crayons. There are many different kinds, some are beautiful, some are plain, and some have weird names, but they all have to learn to live in the same box. Why can't we all learn to live in the same world?"

Photo courtesy of Karen Fehderau

Conference Traces Shared Journey of Cheyenne, Mennonites

CLINTON, Okla. — A conference organized by the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee celebrated the shared faith journeys of Mennonites and Native Americans — an encounter that over the span of 126 years has grown from the Cheyenne and Arapaho reservations of western Oklahoma to churches founded in Indian communities throughout North America.

“Cheyenne, Arapaho, Mennonite: Journey from Darlington,” held March 30 - April 2, focused on the legacy of General Conference Mennonite missionaries and the Native Americans at Oklahoma’s Darlington Indian Agency.

Samuel and Susanna Haurly were the first foreign missionaries sent out by the General Conference church in 1880. They were invited by Quaker Indian agent Brinton Darlington to help educate Cheyenne and Arapaho children in an agency school near El Reno. Other Mennonite mission stations, such as the Red Moon Community near Hammon, soon followed as the two groups drew closer and permanent congregations were planted and thrived.

Though the legacy of Christian missionaries among the Indians often has been harsh and culturally cataclysmic, conference speaker Clyde Ellis said in some cases the encounter was positive for both sides.

“Ironically, a great number of [Native Americans] found solace in the practices that had been intended to destroy their culture,” said Ellis, a history professor at Elon (N.C.) University and author of *The Jesus Road*, a study of mission among the Indians.

Ellis, an authority on Kiowa culture, has focused much of his work on the Kiowa-Comanche-Apache Reservation in southern Oklahoma. He said the Dawes Act of 1887, which broke reservations into individual family land allotments, in some ways hastened the disruptive effects of mission influence on Indian culture, in addition to rending the foundations of Native life.

Still, Ellis said, the growth of Christianity “did not mean the end of Indian identity.” In places such as the Kiowa reservation, with its Baptist missionaries, and the Darlington Agency, with its Mennonite influence, the two cultures became interwoven and mutually supportive.

“The absence of a reservation did not mean the absence of a community,” Ellis said. “The borders became more permeable, but not



Five Cheyenne chiefs bless the “Return to the Earth” repatriation burial site at the Cheyenne Cultural Center in Clinton, Oklahoma. The site is dedicated for receiving “culturally unidentifiable” Native American remains taken from museums and public lands over the past 200 years.”

without a great deal of heartache. . . . What’s important is how things stayed together.”

In addition to exploring various historic aspects of the Darlington encounter, the conference also looked at the Indian world view and how it has changed in modern times. “Indians are very circular in their thinking,” said keynote speaker Donald Fixico, a professor of history at Arizona State University in Phoenix. “Instead of history, we should be looking at experiences.”

Fixico, of Seminole and Muscogee Creek heritage, said Native Americans see themselves as more communal than individual — a view that continues to evolve despite the growing urbanization of many tribal groups.

“Among the Creeks and the Seminoles, to be lost is our hell,” Fixico said. “The worst thing that can happen to you is to be disconnected.”

Fixico, who spoke March 31, also explored the dynamics of Indian leadership, and particularly the Cheyenne tradition of peace chiefs — leaders who carried no weapons and advocated reconciliation.

Fixico noted that tribal peace leaders often have gone through war, helping them experience both sides of conflict.

“Peace is not just that which is not war,” Fixico said. “Peace is within, that pure

moment.”

Fixico said Southern Cheyenne peace chief Lawrence Hart, a Mennonite pastor and one of the conference’s organizers, is such a person.

A former Marine Corps pilot who later embraced Christian nonviolence, as well as retaining his love of Cheyenne tradition and ritual, “Lawrence Hart is a person who walks in between,” Fixico said.

About 200 people participated in the conference, which also included a variety of presentations on Cheyenne-Arapaho culture and Mennonite mission work.

Other programs focused on the moral issues driving the repatriation of Native American remains taken from public lands over the past 200 years.

—Robert Rhodes, *Mennonite Weekly Review*
April 4, 2006, Used with permission.

Visit
www.mennonitechurch.ca
for more resource information
and events.

Northern Gospel Light Singers

The Northern Gospel Light Singers were busy again this past year (2005-06) bringing music and prayers through song and testimonies. We are blessed with many good musicians from many different communities and denominations. God is making a way for us to enter new communities all the time.

This past winter we went to the Whitemouth Fellowship Church and did a two-night service with songs and praises. We also got invited to Lac du Bonnet at the Pioneer Club, where we'll be returning again on April 23, 2006. The community of Lac du Bonnet also invited us to sing and be part of the July 1st parade again this year. We are also invited back to

Beausejour to the Manitoba Gospel Jamboree this summer.

We are traveling to Gretna for a service this spring (May 7) so you can see we are very busy serving people, both young and old. We do all this on love offerings as we do not charge a fee. We leave it up to the people to give whatever they can. "This is not a job; this is a service." The Lord always provides a way. We feel when we do good things for people, good things will happen to us. We always say we (and you) have to have faith that the Lord will look after the rest.

The Northern Gospel Light Singers are currently working on a CD which will be released shortly. It takes time to bring our group



Neill von Ganten

The Northern Gospel Light Singers.

together since there are twelve in our group when we're all together. I'd like to thank Bill Meade for all the good, hard work he does for us in the studio. God has surely blessed him with many talents,

which he doesn't keep to himself! Keep up the good work, Bill. We all love you.

—Charles Simard,
Manigotagan, MB



Letters

Romans 12:10 -- Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another.

Who Are We?

Just to let you know a bit about myself first of all. On my mother's side I come from Mennonite stock, dating back to the late 1800s, from both Russia and Holland. On my father's side I am American Negro and Cherokee. My wife and I have three grown sons. Here is some of my thinking that I would like to share with you.

Who are we, if not children of the living God? If we are on the same page with that, it can also be said that we are brothers and sisters in Christ. Since we are a diverse nation, made up of different races, creeds, cultures, and languages, the edict that we are all brothers and sisters is often hard for some to swallow.

If that premise is true, how do we deal with our brothers and sisters? Do we respect them, honor them, and include them in our lives? This secular world we live in today makes that a very hard question, and while some deal with

that in various ways, others not at all.

When our neighbors look as though they may have come from a different land, are they made welcome, invited into our homes, churches, and synagogues, or do we relegate them to be sectioned off to their own communities?

When we look at those that are considered immigrants, is that brotherly love extended or is that title held only for those that carry that specific bloodline? Remember, we are all immigrants, even those that are referred to as First Nations. The Bible tells us, and historians show us, that civilization began in the Middle East. It was the building of the tower of Babel where we became a variety of peoples with the need to spread to other climes. We are told that somewhere between ten to fifteen thousand years ago, North America was all ice. As the polar caps melted, some folks migrated over the Bering Strait and eventually roamed over the millennia to where they are today. So, using that as a place to start, we are all immigrants, so let us not be hasty in pointing out our differences. A gentleman once said, "If you point a finger at someone, remember that there are three more fingers pointing back at yourself."

As the cumulative church ventures forward into the coming years, Christ continues to call us to be disciples. John 13:

35... "By this shall all people know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another?" With these instructions in mind we reach out to our fellow brothers and sisters of our First Nations.

This writer had opportunity to speak with a few local First Nations people in regards to Christianity and how they visualize being a part of the organized church. There are several similarities in some of their stories that have a parallel to many of our biblical stories, and possibly this is where we need to go to gain a level of confidence with those that look at the "Church" with skepticism. Some take a dim view of our type of spirituality because of what it represented to them. It was the clergy of the church [residential schools] that denied them their language, customs, longhouse ceremonies and dealt out various forms of abuse when the "church's way" wasn't adhered to. It took several years to create those feelings of distrust and it will take further years to get that trust back. It would be prudent of us to develop strategies that would overcome that distrust and it can be done with how we, the outsiders, deal with our own interpretation of who are our brothers and sisters.

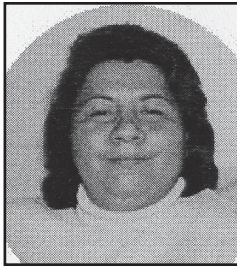
Ken Hinton, Langley, BC

Deaths

Wendy Mary Sever-

eight, age 57 years of Arborg, Manitoba, died suddenly on February 26, 2006 at the Health Sciences Centre in Winnipeg. The funeral service was held at the Aboriginal Funeral Chapel in Winnipeg on March 1. Burial followed the next day at the New Cote Cemetery, Cote First Nation, Saskatchewan.

Wendy is survived by her spouse, Joe Everett; daughters Cindy (Derek) Grimolfson of Riverton and Hattie of Yorkton, SK; son Rodney (Lorie) of Canora, SK; twelve grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren; three sisters and six brothers.



Aboriginal Funeral Chapel

William George Green,

age 67 years, passed away peacefully at the Health Sciences Centre in Winnipeg on Thursday, March 16, 2006, with his family at his side.

William was born in Bloodvein River, Manitoba, on February 6, 1939 and resided there his entire life. He was employed as a Band Constable for over 30 years for Bloodvein First Nations, until retiring in 2004.

William loved the outdoors, enjoyed hunting and was a commercial fisherman on Lake Winnipeg at McBeth Point. He enjoyed meeting with family and friends and also attending church. William had a good sense of humor and always made people laugh. He always joked around and was a happy-go-lucky guy.

William leaves to cherish his beautiful memory, two sons, Dennis and Donovan; two daughters, Christina (Norman) and family, Helena (Gerald) and children; one sister, Alma Green (Cecil); numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews, cousins and friends. He was predeceased by his wife Maudina; sons Victor, Allan and Dean Green plus one sister, Violet Duck. Interment took place at Bloodvein with Pastor David Russel officiating.



Aboriginal Funeral Chapel

Lawrence Harold Settee, age 83 years of Winnipeg, Manitoba, died peacefully on March 16, 2006 at the Concordia Hospital.

Lawrence was born at the family home in The Narrows, near Matheson Island, MB. He spent his childhood and early married life at Matheson Island, before moving to Winnipeg

for work. In later years he fixed up a small place at the Island for them so that they and their family could spend many happy times there

Lawrence worked for Manitoba Hydro for 30 years and was the pastor of the Indian and Metis Pentecostal Church on Main Street for many years. He also had a program on Channel 11 for five years called "A Step of Faith."

Lawrence married Dorothy Crate of the Fisher River Cree Nation in 1952 and they were privileged to celebrate almost 52 years of married life before she preceded him in death in June 2004. They are survived by their six children, Jeanette (Allen), Leona, Dan, Jim, Cathy (Craig) and Charley; twelve grandchildren and six great-grandchildren; sister Florence Wortman; many nieces, nephews, in-laws and friends.

The memorial service was held on Monday evening, March 20 at the St. Matthew's Anglican Church in Winnipeg. A wake service and funeral were held on March 21 and 22 at the Steven's Memorial United Church in Fisher River, MB. Interment followed at the Fisher River Community Cemetery.

Thomas Ernest

Mowat of Matheson Island, Manitoba, died suddenly on March 25, 2006 at the age of 81 years. He was visiting his daughter in Selkirk at the time of his death.

Tom was a life-long resident of Matheson Island and enjoyed living along the shores of Lake Winnipeg. He was a commercial fisherman and trapper right from his youth and only quit when his health demanded that he slow down.

The last three years were very hard on Tom because he lost seven very close family members to death in that short period of time. It was only his strong determination and his faith that kept Tom going in spite of these losses and the loneliness he felt, especially after the death of his wife Nora. He especially enjoyed having two of his great-grandchildren (Nick and Hannah) and their parents move in with him, and they readily provided the daily

Community news



Neill von Gunten

smiles and love that a home needs.

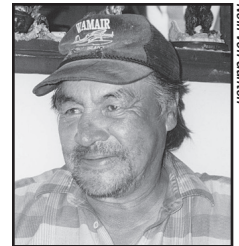
Tom is survived by his four children: Shirley (George) Selkirk; Lillian (Eggert) Thordarson; Linda Smith and Ernie Mowat Sr.; numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews, in-laws and friends.

The funeral service was held on March 31 at the Matheson Island Community Hall, John Klassen officiating. Interment followed in the Community Cemetery.

Morris Oigg, age 64 years of Matheson Island, Manitoba, died suddenly at his home on April 17, 2006. He was a commercial fisherman on Lake Winnipeg his entire life, until ill health forced him to retire.

Morris is survived by his brothers Roddy, Stanford (Brenda) and Arthur.

The funeral service was held on April 29 at the Matheson Island Community Hall, Fred Peters officiating.



Neill von Gunten

Tribute to Bella Cook

The death of Isabella Cook on March 22, 2006 is the kind of event that brings our thoughts to a halt. Her departure in this Lenten season at the outset of early spring is like a stoppage in play in the game of life.

An elder from our midst has been taken from us. Her vision sustained the hopes of those who knew her. She knew right from wrong. She knew life's deepest meanings. She possessed a faith that reached right to the roots of life. And what she knew she demonstrated with her gentle love.

Although Bella's death marks the end of her journey among us, it prompts us who remain behind, to ponder the meaning of both life and death. Left in the pathways of her pilgrimage are landmarks along the way. Our memory of Bella will be like road signs that point in the direction of life as it was intended to be. While she has been called from us her path of life has been left for us to travel on. It is a path that will surely bring us to our own God-given destination.

She who breathes no more now mirrors back the limits of our life, reflecting our own brevity. Yet visions of mortality clarify our destiny.



Aboriginal Funeral Chapel

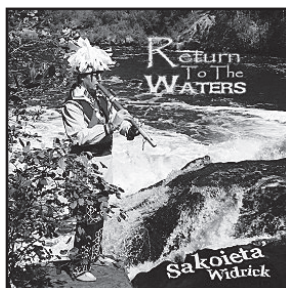


Neill von Gunten

"Education and Resource Kit on Aboriginal Rights, Peace and Justice" by the Quaker Aboriginal Affairs Committee of the Canadian Friends Service Committee.

Aboriginal Rights, Peace and Justice Education and Resource Kit

Often we are overwhelmed with the depth and magnitude of Aboriginal Rights, Peace and Justice. This can leave us feeling unclear about how we can contribute to the right ordering of Aboriginal justice. This Education and Resource Kit was created by the Quaker Aboriginal Affairs Committee, a standing committee of the Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC), to help individuals and groups study the issues and act upon them. The Kit offers broad brush introduction and includes a guided meditation, a booklet of essays by Aboriginal and Quaker writers, the draft United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and much more. This is an excellent resource for individual or group study. Please contact Canadian Friends Service Committee in Toronto to order a copy: qaac@quaker.ca or (416) 920-5213. Cost: \$20.00 for individuals; \$25.00 for institutions.



Well here it is folks, my newest album just released through Sunshine Records. This album is filled with just beautiful flute music that will stir your heart and heal your soul. You can buy this DVD for \$15.00 each or two for \$25.00 in Canadian funds, plus shipping and handling. To order contact sakoieta@mohawkflute.com or mail: Sakoieta' Widrick, 10-495 Main Street, Selkirk, Manitoba R1A 2H3

Returning to the Teachings: Exploring Aboriginal Justice

By Rupert Ross
Toronto: Penguin Books. University of Saskatchewan, 1996.
277 pages. ISBN 0-14-025870-1

In his bestselling book *Dancing with a Ghost*, Rupert Ross began his exploration of aboriginal approaches to justice and the visions



of life which shape them. Now, in *Returning to the Teachings*, he takes that exploration further still.

During a three-year secondment with Justice Canada, Ross traveled from the Yukon to Cape Breton Island, examining – and experiencing – the widespread aboriginal preference for “peacemaker justice.” In this remarkable book, he invites us to accompany him as he moves past the pain and suffering that grip so many communities and into the exceptional promise of individual, family and community healing which traditional teachings are now restoring to aboriginal Canada. He generously shares his confusions, frustrations and delights as Elders and other teachers guide him, in their unique and often puzzling ways, into ancient visions of Creation and our role within it.

Returning to the Teachings is about aboriginal justice and much more, speaking not only to our minds, but also to our hearts and spirits. Above all, it stands as a search for the values and visions that give life its significance and which any justice system, aboriginal or otherwise, must serve and respect. (Taken from back cover.)

Rise Up! Shaping the Future of Indigenous Ministry Through Cross-Cultural Partnership.

By Anita L. Keith
Delta, BC: Healing the Land Publishing Canada, 2004.
71 pages. ISBN 1-897091-26-5

The Spirit of the Living God is calling for His Native people to rise up and take their place in His body. We are made in His image, poised and magnificent Nations, set in the stage of natural beauty, walking out our relationships, with each other and with Creator, in ceremonies and traditions, dressed in full regalia, believing in the sacredness of life of the One who gives life. This is who we are. Our voices have been silenced too long. We have remained in the backdrop of not only society but ministry and missions as well. No longer will we remain invisible and silenced. We are here. See us! Hear our collective voice! It's time to Rise Up! (Taken from back cover.)

Both books can be borrowed from the Mennonite Church Canada Resources Centre by calling 204-888-6781 or 1-866-888-6785 (toll free) or online at the MC Canada website.

Events Calendar

July 4 – 7, 2006

Mennonite Church Canada Annual Assembly sessions, Edmonton, Alberta.



July 6 – 10, 2006

In all that we share. “Visioning the next 100 Years” - Mattagami First Nation
Mattagami First Nation would like to invite you to this four-day camping event, where we will stand with the community while they commemorate the centennial of the signing of Treaty # Nine.
To register for this event, or to find out more, go to www.mcc/ontario.org.

July 24 – 27, 2006

Native Assembly 2006, hosted by the Poarch Mennonite Church, Atmore, Alabama. Registration forms and more information are available from the Native Ministry office.

August 8 – 13, 2006

Annual MCC BC camping trip on Vancouver Island. Families and individuals are encouraged to contact MCC BC for more information. Telephone: 604-850-6639; 604-857-0011 toll free from Vancouver; 1-888-622-6337 toll-free elsewhere in BC; www.mcc.org/bc.

August 26 -27, 2006

“Bridging the Gap” weekend at Heaven’s Gate Ranch, Siksika First Nations, Alberta. (See article on page 6 for more information).

September 8-10, 2006

Family Camp weekend at the Manigotagan Community Campground, hosted by the Manigotagan Community Chapel.

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.

