

my friends Intototemak

Fall 2008 Vol. 37, No. 3



Oliver Boulette shares his musical talents at the Peoples Summit held in Winnipeg, MB., July 8-10, 2008.



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Native Assembly in Clinton, Oklahoma.



Witness



Reaching Up — and Out!

We trust that you had a summer full of stimulation and challenges, as well as times of relaxation, of enjoying God's beautiful creation, and also took advantage of opportunities to visit with family and friends – those far away and those nearby. We are thankful for God's blessings and for safety as we travelled.

As you read the following pages, you will see that it has been a full, stimulating summer for many of us within the larger church – especially the larger gatherings at the Mennonite Church Canada Assembly and Summit sessions, and at Native Assembly in Clinton, Oklahoma. As we meet each other and listen to each other, our worldview grows and relationships are built.

Another exciting development this summer was the completion of the REACHING UP, TO GOD OUR CREATOR resource box. The box is ready to be borrowed from the Mennonite Church Canada Resource Centre for use in Sunday School classes (adults as well as children's groups), clubs, intergenerational sessions, VBS classes, camps, and much more. You can preview the resource box at www.mennonitechurch.ca/resources. It can also be purchased from the Resource Centre.

Because God's truth is found in all cultures this project is dedicated to showing some of the wisdom of Jesus Christ that is reflected in Aboriginal sacred teachings. The writer to the Ephesians grasped the truth we have been discovering when he wrote "With all wisdom and insight God has made known to us the mystery of His will ... for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in Christ. (Ephesians 1: 8b-10a) Our prayer is that this resource box will help us learn some of the wisdom that God shared with Aboriginal people and that this, in turn, will enhance our knowledge of God's truth and wisdom.

We are grateful for opportunities to share this resource with a variety of people at the MC Canada Assembly and Summit sessions in Winnipeg and at Native Assembly in Oklahoma. We were thrilled that members of the working committee were able to present the workshops in each venue and have the opportunity to share their personal reasons for becoming involved in this project. We look forward to further opportunities to share the resource this year.

This fall we are looking forward to many new experi-

ences and meeting many of you along the way as we travel in several provinces. It is important that we share with each other and broaden our horizons. As we listen to each other's stories, we learn more about ourselves in the process.

These words by Lila Watson, Indigenous Australian activist, are so true and important for us to remember:

"If you have come here to help us, you are wasting your time ... But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together."

First, we must listen with open hearts. For example, keep your ears open for opportunities to listen and learn what the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (which was set up by the Canadian government in June) is doing in your area to hear the stories of residential school survivors and their families. For many of us, hearing the stories will be a "first" for us; our history books in school have not been good at teaching us much of anything from the Aboriginal perspective or of relating the injustices that occurred during colonization. A conquering mentality has pervaded the history books much too long! It will be hard to hear what took place right here in our midst, but it is necessary before there can be forgiveness and reconciliation and we can establish trust between us as people.

It is time that we liberate each other to be the special person that God created us to be! Walking together and working together – in a good and respectful way – is what the journey of life is about. That is also how God's healing and hope flow through us to the world! May our journey be a good one!

That is all we have for now. Migwetch.

Neill and Edith

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



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

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

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VISION
HEALING
& HOPE

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



Gifts of God the Creator

“Whatever happens to our earth will happen to the children of the earth,” she says. “The earth will provide for us as long as we respect and honour everything it offers.” Métis Elder Mae Louise Campbell shared this old proverb with those gathered for the summit seminar “The Spiritual Significance of Land and Water” facilitated by the Mennonite Creation Care Network and led by Norman Meade, also a Métis Elder. Presenters compared the traditional Aboriginal view of Creation – with a particular emphasis on water – to what happens when Creation is misused.

Campbell said that aboriginal people believe God gave them the responsibility of caring for Creation – and they don’t take this responsibility lightly. Traditionally, they showed thanks for whatever they used. If they took a bucket of water from the lake or gathered berries from a bush, they offered something in return -- an offering of tobacco, perhaps. The first Europeans to arrive in North America interpreted Aboriginal respect for the earth and their expressions of gratitude as idol worship.

The phrase “water of life” has particular meaning to the Aboriginal people who note its relationship to the life-giving womb. It is not to be tampered with.

Greg McIvor from Cross Lake, Manitoba, knows intimately the damage inflicted by interfering with nature. His family has worked a trap-line in Northern Manitoba for generations. But through hydro developments, vast areas of the trap-line and the land around it were flooded. Caribou and some other species of wildlife have vanished. Trees sit in pools of water, slowly rotting.

Using his own resources, McIvor chartered a helicopter with film cameras and mapped out about 3100 square kilometers around his trap-line. He

shared portions of the video; much of the landscape is muddy brown, barren land. The brown areas are flood lands, water pooling around the trunks of trees that once composed a lush forest. He says that when Manitoba Hydro plans projects or measures the environmental impact of existing dams, it restricts reporting to shoreline damage. It does not look to the areas beyond.

McIvor is worried about more than the loss of wildlife or the trees themselves. When vegetation sits in water, it deteriorates, creating methane gas, carbon dioxide and other chemicals.



Métis Elders Mae Louise Campbell and Norman Meade, and Greg McIvor from Cross Lake, Manitoba led the “Spiritual Meaning of Land and Water” Seminar.

By-products of decomposition sink back into the water, contaminating it and killing fish. He reports that in some northern areas, the affect of overland flooding is “the equivalent of a 300 megawatt coal-burning generating station.”

“They say it’s renewable energy,” McIvor states. “I don’t know where they got that from.”

Manitoba Hydro has plans to build more dams. “Our people live along the rivers and lakes and depend on them and the bush for survival, to maintain who we are as a people,” McIvor says. “We can’t go into the bush anymore. It’s all flooded, it’s destroyed.”

At the conclusion of the seminar, Campbell, Meade and McIvor were presented with gifts of appreciation – clay cups for holding water.

Deborah Froese
Mennonite Church Canada



People's Summit for Faithful Living

The "People's Summit for Faithful Living," a special joint gathering of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada was held on the campus of Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, Manitoba from July

8-10, 2008 – on the heels of the annual delegate session of Mennonite Church Canada. Native Ministry had several opportunities for involvement those days, as the following pictures and articles will show.

MC Canada's Native Ministries work began in Manitoba with the Bergthaler Mennonite Churches 60 years ago, in 1948. The informal "Wednesday afternoon in the park" was a good time to showcase some local Aboriginal talent and celebrate those 60 years of involvement with each other.



Thelma Barker Meade, an Ojibway elder, and Norman Meade, a Metis elder, welcomed people to the Summit gathering and offered their blessing on this important event. Jack Suderman, General Secretary of MC Canada, and James Schrag of MC USA, acknowledged the welcome on behalf of all those gathered.

Oliver Boulette grew up watching his grandfather play the fiddle in Manigotagan, Manitoba, and was privileged to learn the art from him as a young man. Now Oliver shares this vibrant Metis tradition of fiddle music in a variety of settings.





Eleven-year-old Tony Lindo has been jigging since the age of four. A family friend calls him The Jigger Extraordinaire. Managed by his grandmother, Judy Moar, he has travelled widely to share his talent – from Whistler, BC to Ontario – and he is on the road almost every second weekend. Tony teaches jigging to elementary grade students. He also square dances. Photo by Katharina Nuss.



The Northern Gospel Light Singers of Manigotagan, Manitoba. From left to right: Dennis Meade, Colleen Meade on drums, Doreen Meade, Bill Meade, Ruth Martin, Marilyn Simard, Charles Simard. Photo by MC Canada Communications

Native Assembly 2008 gathers in Oklahoma

Native Assembly 2008 was hosted by the Cheyenne and Arapaho Mennonite churches of Oklahoma in Clinton, Oklahoma from July 28-31. The gathering at the Frisco Center met around the theme of "Unity and Service in the Name of Christ" as presented by speakers Adrian Jacobs of Brantford, Ontario; Zoughbi Zoughbi of Bethlehem, Palestine; Anita Keith of Winnipeg, Manitoba; and Iris deLeon Hartshorn of Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

The Canadian contingent of thirty people came from several communities in Manitoba, Edmonton (Alberta), Granisle, BC and southern Ontario. Harley Eagle (MCC Canada Aboriginal Neighbours staff person) and Norman Meade (MCC Manitoba Aboriginal Neighbours staff person) of Winnipeg were among those who served as workshop leaders.

In addition to the speakers, music is an important part of the morning and evening worship services. This year we had the added bonus of the banjo (Doug Krehbiel), the bongo drum (Leo Hartshorn) and an enthusiastic group of young people to accompany the congregational singing. The opportunity for the various language groups represented at the Assembly to share special numbers in their mother tongue is always a highlight. This year the Canadian group sang songs in Ojibway and Kwakwiltl on Wednesday evening.

On Tuesday most of the congregations present brought their church banners forward for display during the rest of the Assembly. On Thursday there was opportunity given for participants to bring forward the school kits they had collected for Mennonite Central Committee to distribute to children around the world. The table was full!

One of the additional features of Native Assembly week is time for the host churches to share their life and community with those who come from across North America. Lawrence Hart, Cheyenne Peace Chief and Mennonite pastor, provided opportunities to hear and see as much of the rich history of the Cheyenne and Arapaho people as time allowed – the very sad times as well as



All photos by Neil von Gunten

This bus group travelled from Manitoba to Oklahoma and picked up two more passengers -- from BC (on left) -- during our days there.

new initiatives in the community.

Before going to the new interpretive centre site and the site of the Battle of the Washita, for example, Lawrence shared with us of the emotion he and others felt some years ago at the time of the re-enactment of the battle, when, unknown to the Cheyenne participants, the descendants of the original US Cavalry members rode up on horseback. [It was there in winter 1868 that General George Armstrong Custer and the Seventh Cavalry attacked the camp of the great Cheyenne Peace Chief Black Kettle and massacred women, children, elders and warriors.] It was at the re-enactment that the full impact of what it means to be a Cheyenne Peace Chief came to Lawrence. At the ceremony, a Cheyenne lady draped a Pendleton blan-

ket over the coffin as it passed by. This was a profound honor for the deceased. The Cheyenne elders of the day asked Lawrence later on to present the Pendleton blanket to the cavalry leader as a gift of forgiveness and peace. As the men embraced each other, there was not a dry eye around. That is the power of peace and forgiveness.

A big THANK YOU to our Oklahoma hosts and for all those who worked hard to make Native Assembly 2008 a success! Lawrence and Betty Hart and the others from the Cheyenne – Arapaho churches were good hosts! We heard over and over again on our return home: I'm already looking forward to two years from now when the next Native Assembly is held! That's real affirmation for what happened in Clinton this year!

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I loved my experience. Being in that diverse mix of people, worshipping, eating, praying, and listening together, brought peace to my heart. This is what I long for. People coming together in Christ, united in him, celebrating the Creator AND celebrating one another -- even though we look different (a good thing), even though we sing different (a good thing), even though we have some different beliefs and practices (can be a good thing!).

Steve Heinrichs
Granisle, BC

Native Assembly 2008 continued

Let's listen to some excerpts from the comments made by a few of the Canadian participants, starting with some first-timers:

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It was a wonderful experience. Being with all these different people, so many different Native Americans, First Nations, and others, was very encouraging. Everyone was so friendly and kind. It gave me much hope - the church can be united and diverse.

I enjoyed the worship. Hearing the different languages was uplifting. I especially liked hearing prayer in Native tongues. When this man prayed in Ojibway, it reminded me of how my parents and ancestors prayed. I want to hear more of that. I want to learn how to worship and sing to God in my traditional ways.

I wish we had more time to be with the people. By the time we start getting to know one another, then it's time to go. The friendships made were so good. I look forward to going again to Assembly, and seeing one another soon.

James West
Tachet Nation, Granisle, BC

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It was great to learn the Cheyenne history, as told by the Cheyenne people themselves. We saw the progress that can happen to a nation when the community works together. Peace Chief Lawrence Hart enjoys sharing his knowledge with visitors, and I sure enjoyed listening to him.

Amanda Simard
Winnipeg, MB

I felt very touched by Peace Chief Lawrence Hart's story of how they repatriated their Indian people from various places around the United States -- an amazing effort and very touching and emotional bridges or hurdles to overcome. I felt spiritually touched to hear the story and see the video on the Battle of the Washita, where General Custer and the Seventh Cavalry attacked the Cheyenne Peace Camp of Black Kettle and massacred a number of women, children, elders and warriors.

I learned a lot from Adrian Jacobs' workshop on "Multiplying Leaders in the Church." I liked the ideas he provided on how we as Native church leaders might do this more effectively.

It was good to just chat and meet people, renewing old acquaintances in some instances or meeting new ones. I learned a lot from each person I met.

Norman Meade
Winnipeg, MB

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A familiar hymn opens with the line: "Can I see another's woe and not be with sorrow filled." That sums up my primary feelings at Native Assembly... The keynote messages focused primarily on the injustices suffered by disenfranchised people such as the Palestinians in Israel and the Aboriginal people of this land.

I was reminded of another quote: "The oppressed people of today may become the oppressors of tomorrow." I looked back into my own history as a descendant of Russian Mennonite ancestry. We, too, experienced oppression, persecution and loss of land and property. Now we have become those who have gained immense wealth (collectively) from the displacement of our Native brothers and sisters. My heart weeps and my spirit mourns. I pray that the people of my ancestry will become more sensitive to the tremendous pain of our Aboriginal brothers and sisters, as well as much more open to the powerful teachings they have to offer, if only we will listen.

The words of a wise Native chief come to mind: "What we do to the earth we do to ourselves." Whenever we participate in the oppression of others, knowingly or unknowingly, the family of God is diminished and the Creator's heart is broken.

Hilda Franz
Gretna, MB

Native Assembly 2008 continued

I was really encouraged by the variety of speakers and issues presented, covering both United States and Canadian Native concerns as well as beyond. I truly appreciated the presence and input of Zoughbi Zoughbi from Bethlehem, Palestine, and that he was given the opportunity to meet directly with North American indigenous people and that connections could be made both ways. There is a strong relationship in the injustices being done and the restorative justice process gives hope.

I was encouraged and challenged by the strength, knowledge and leadership examples of Adrian Jacobs, Anita Keith, Iris deLeon Hartsborn, Harley Eagle and others at the Assembly. The comparison made between the Gibeonites and Israel and the Native land claims in North America that we read in 2 Samuel 21:1-9 was a new thought for me.

I was encouraged by the Mennonite Central Committee US brochure on Native American Issues and the United Nations brochure on indigenous peoples. I was not aware of them before this.

I feel indebted to the great work that Lawrence and Betty Hart have done in so many areas – preserving the history of the Washita battlefield, the Return to the Earth project, establishing the Cheyenne Cultural Center, and assisting with many other projects for the Cheyenne – Arapaho people.

*Egon and Erna Enns
Winnipeg, MB*



One of the aspects of Native Assembly is fellowship with fellow believers in Christ. Here we see Ernie Fontaine (Riverton, MB), Steve Heinrichs (Granisle, BC), Neill von Gunten (Winnipeg, MB), James West (Tachet, BC) and Norman Meade (Manigotagan and Winnipeg, MB) enjoying this opportunity to get to know each other.

Power of forgiveness transcends generations

Forgiveness and reconciliation have a compelling, residual effect. Just ask Cheyenne Peace Chief and Mennonite pastor, Lawrence Hart, or the group from Mennonite Church Canada Native Ministry with whom he shared his story during Native Assembly in Clinton, Oklahoma this summer.

A tour of local historical sites prompted Hart to tell his guests about an incident that he says taught him the true significance of being a Peace Chief.

The town of Cheyenne yearly re-enacted the Battle of Washita which took place in the winter of 1868. In that battle, General Custer and the 7th US Cavalry played “Garry Owens,” their unofficial marching song, and attacked the camp of Cheyenne Peace Chief Black Kettle, killing many.

Although the re-enactment had always taken place without the local native community, on the 100th anniversary, the town invited Hart and his people, including other Peace Chiefs, to join them. “I told them there was no way we can celebrate that event,” Hart said. “But they persisted.”

By the time the town presented

their third invitation, Hart responded with a challenge. “I told them we could come and commemorate the event without celebrating if they would allow the reburial of bones [of our people] that had been unearthed by erosion.” Hart also requested a burial place for these bones, which had been on display in the Black Kettle Museum. The burial would take place at the end of the event.

“The town agreed. They even provided a small bronze coffin.”

As Hart watched the unfolding scene from a nearby stage, he learned that the young re-enactors approaching in authentic uniforms and carrying authentic weapons were the Grandsons of the US 7th Cavalry Grand Army Republic, descendants of the men who had killed his ancestors. They began to play “Garry Owens,” but their instruments froze in the cold.

Hart was furious that he had not been told of their participation.

It began to snow, just as it had 100 years earlier. After the re-enactment and as the funeral procession emerged from the Black Kettle Museum, Hart discovered Grandsons were there, wait-

Native Assembly 2008 continued



Emily Collins of Riverton, Manitoba, and Neill von Gunten of the Native Ministry office present a dream catcher crafted by Emily to Betty and Lawrence Hart, hosts of Native Assembly and pastor of the Koinonia Mennonite Church in Clinton.

ing to take part in the funeral. They saluted the coffin as it was carried toward its resting place.

All of this angered Hart even further. But as the procession continued, a Cheyenne woman removed a beautiful Pendleton blanket from her shoulders, folded it and placed it on the coffin in tribute to her ancestors. Tradition demanded that the blanket be given away. Hart was instructed by other more senior Peace Chiefs to call forward the Captain of the regiment to receive the blanket.

Hart's respect for the other chiefs forced his compliance. The Captain marched toward the Chiefs. "Two paces away from us, he drew his sabre and saluted us," Hart said. "I asked him to do an about face and one of the other chiefs put the blanket on his shoulders.

"That was a moment that people will never forget, an act of reconciliation," Hart recalled. "Throughout the crowd in the cold and snow, there was not a dry eye."

But the proceedings were not yet complete. The regiment followed the Chiefs back into the museum. "All of

them, especially the younger men, were crying and they started to embrace us one by one."

Hart and the Captain were the last to meet. The Captain removed a small oval pin from his uniform lapel and showed it to Hart. It was a "Garry Owens pin," a symbol of the dreaded marching song.

Hart remembered the Captain's words clearly. "Lawrence, I want you to have this. Accept it on behalf of all your people. I want you to be assured that never again will your people hear the 'Garry Owens.'"

The emotional impact of Hart's story was not lost on those who heard the retelling. Hart admitted that he often sees tears in response.

"It was very moving," said Edith von Gunten, who co-directs Mennonite Church Canada Native Ministry with her husband, Neill.

The heartfelt words of a Cheyenne Peace Chief demonstrated the power of forgiveness to transcend time and generations.

*Deborah Froese
Mennonite Church Canada*

Post-assembly bus trouble

Before we knew it the sessions were over and it was time to bid farewell and prepare for the two-day trip home. After traveling about 200 miles on Friday morning, August 1st, the bus suddenly lost power and we found ourselves on the side of the road half-way between Oklahoma City and Wichita.

The outside temperature was just under 100 degrees F. by 9 a.m. so to have to shut down the air conditioner was rather difficult. No one on the busy interstate highway stopped to see what was wrong.

Suddenly our prayers were answered and a van came driving across the median to check us out. It was Willis Busenitz and his family on their way home from the Assembly! They had driven by, recognized our bus and turned around to find out what was wrong.

We had all arrived at the truck stop by 11:30 a.m. It was a large, very adequate facility to meet all our needs, including a Dairy Queen restaurant, and the staff was most accommodating. It was after 5 p.m. before the driver came back with our luggage and the news that the transmission was gone and that he was still trying to find alternative arrangements to get us home.

All the efforts to find another bus to take us back north proved to be in vain. Finally someone at Hertz rental agency answered the phone. She had just put the phone on the answering machine and was ready to go out the door when the phone rang. For some reason she decided to answer. Even though their office was 36 miles away her manager assisted us and got the rest of us to the nearest motel.

In the meantime our bus driver's boss was able to charter a bus to pick us up the next morning and take us to Sioux Falls, South Dakota, where we met a charter bus from Winnipeg to take us the rest of the way into Winnipeg. It was a longer, slower trip home than we had expected, but we only have praise and thanks to the Lord for His protecting hand with an endless number of blessings along the way.

*Henry Neufeld
Winnipeg, MB*

“Reaching Up to God our Creator” Seminar

Nicole Bauman attended the “Bridging Faith and Culture” seminar led by Norman and Thelma Meade, Nicole Lea, Elsie Rempel and Neill and Edith von Gunten during the Summit gathering. That is where the two Nicole’s met and where this article began to form. It reflects the connection they made at that time, a connection that will hopefully continue as the Global Youth Summit gathering meets several days before the Mennonite World Conference sessions in Asuncion, Paraguay in early July 2009.

While the Canadian government recently offered an apology for their oppressive treatment of Aboriginal people, Mennonite Church Canada is also seeking to honour their Aboriginal members through new educational resources that learn from Aboriginal teachings and traditions.

Nicole Lea, the young woman who illustrated these materials, grew up on Matheson Island, Manitoba, an Aboriginal fishing community of about 100 people. Nicole, who is Cree, also grew up participating in the small chapel on Matheson Island, a church started by Mennonites invited there by members of the community. Although Nicole has long been familiar with Christian teachings, and with her own Aboriginal heritage, it’s only recently that she’s begun exploring the ways that these two pieces of her identity can complement each other.

Native Ministry, part of Mennonite Church Canada, has also been exploring how our understandings of Christian faith can be made richer through the incorporation of Aboriginal values. Their new resource box, *Reaching up to God Our Creator*, grows out of the conviction that the wisdom of Jesus Christ, who is revealed as the wisdom of God in the New Testament, has been present in Aboriginal sacred teachings for a long time,” according to their website. Included are materials for Sunday school, Vacation Bible School, or other inter-generational settings, which use various Aboriginal symbols. For example, the medicine wheel encourages the Christian and Aboriginal principles of

harmony with and respect for all peoples and Creation, and the Aboriginal symbol of the sacred tree comes to life in many Biblical teachings which highlight the wisdom and meaning found in trees.

Nicole illustrated several visuals, including the book, *Maskipiton*, which tells the traditional story of a Cree man who learned about the life of Jesus, left his violent past, and became a respected peace chief and peace teacher. Through creating these illustrations, this story came to life for Nicole, and it became part of her personal journey of integrating her Christian beliefs and Cree traditions.

Edith and Neill von Gunten, Native Ministry co-directors, emphasize that these new materials are important for a variety of reasons. In many Aboriginal communities, churches planted by missionaries have long been advised against incorporating traditional practices into their Christian faith, which has left “many of them without a clear knowledge of who they were as an Aboriginal person in light of Christianity’s focus for so many years.”

The von Gunten’s, who have worked in Aboriginal communities since 1969, have also discovered that many non-Aboriginal “constituents do not respect Aboriginal people as having a revelation from God ... nor do they have any knowledge or understanding of the Aboriginal teachings held by the elders.” For this reason, they are also excited to see these resources used more broadly in

the Mennonite church.

“The joy comes as we see Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people get to know each other and respect each other as true brothers and sisters. True healing and reconciliation will only come as we listen with open hearts and minds and share honestly with each other in the spirit of love,” say the von Gunten’s. It is their hope that the *Reaching up to God Our Creator* material will foster such relationships.

Nicole Lea has similar hopes. As she has come to understand and appreciate her own heritage more fully, she has also become more interested in exploring other cultures. Next summer, she will take part in the Global Youth Summit in Paraguay, which is part of the Mennonite World Conference gathering taking place there next July. She looks forward to this as an opportunity to get to know other young Anabaptists from around the world, and anticipates challenging conversations with people from diverse backgrounds. Perhaps this will be another opportunity for “true healing and reconciliation” to “come as we listen with open hearts and minds and share honestly with each other in the spirit of love” within our global church community.

Nicole Bauman
Goshen, IN

Used with permission from *Mennonite Weekly Review*, August 4, 2008 issue.

These resources are available at <http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/resources/Home>



This enthusiastic group of children joined the young adults from the Springfield Heights Mennonite Church located in Winnipeg for a week of summer camp at Matheson Island, Manitoba in July.



Adrian Jacobs, the aboriginal liaison with MCC Ontario's Aboriginal Neighbours program, addresses the crowd at this year's ecumenical peace walk organized by Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ontario.

Ecumenical Peace Walk

*Aboriginal Land Rights; Caring for the Earth, Justice for the Land
Statement to All Levels of Government*

Many of us here today are non-native Canadians. We speak not on the behalf of Aboriginal people, for that is not our place; but we speak as Canadians and people of faith. And as we have been reminded by Adrian Jacobs, we also speak as treaty people. Many generations ago our government entered into treaties on our behalf. Today there are over 800 unresolved land claims within the Canadian court system, which our government will negotiate on our behalf. It is for this reason that we speak!

As people of conscience, we urge our government to have the courage to do what is right and the compassion to do what is fair. Any solutions put forward need to be solutions of substance. They will probably need to be creative – solutions that attempt to right the wrongs that have been done to Aboriginal people and honor the promises that have been made in the past, while also taking into account the concerns of people currently residing on disputed lands.

As Canadians, we urge our government to work ardently toward resolving these land claims – as swiftly and as carefully as possible. Many of these claims have been in the court system for

years – some for more than 25 years. It is in everyone's interests to have these claims resolved now. It is certainly in the interest of Aboriginal people; but it is also in the interest of local governments, of city planners, and even of developers. It is in the interest of Canadian landowners, and of all Canadians who would like to see justice done.

We also call on our local government to put a stop to development on disputed lands. This will show good faith. If there is a land claim within the court system, we need to allow the system to resolve the issue before pursuing development on that land. Join us in calling the federal government to swift resolution on these issues.

As people of faith, we acknowledge that the history between the churches and Aboriginal people runs very deep, and that it is tarnished by much pain and mistrust. The churches have much work to do in this area. But recently, in response to our invitation to this Peace Walk, a local Aboriginal community member said that she feels like we are coming into a "new dawn, a time for a new beginning, [a] new relationship" between Aboriginal people and the

churches. We want to be part of that. We commit ourselves to working towards that goal. We believe it is possible for our government to also enter into a new relationship with Aboriginal people. But it will take hard work and creativity, and will include land claim solutions that are just. We invite our governments, at all levels, to join us in working towards the vision of a new dawn, and a new relationship with Aboriginal people. We look forward to working with you toward this goal.

*Josie Winterfeld
Kitchener, ON*

Josie Winterfeld is the missions, peace and justice, and outreach worker at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church. She delivered this statement during the church's ecumenical peace walk through Kitchener, Ontario, on April 20, 2008.

Excerpts originally published in Canadian Mennonite. Reprinted by permission of the author and photographer.

Reaching Up to God Our Creator resource box. Edited by Norman Meade, Thelma Meade, John Pankratz, Pat Pankratz, Edith and Neill von Gunten. Illustrations by Nicole Lea, Eric Peters and Katharina Nuss.

This resource kit contains a junior and adult binder of lesson plans, as well as a variety of other resources – including posters, DVDs and books -- to complement the lessons. The six sessions are designed for use in Sunday school classes, clubs and camp settings, and for use intergenerationally.



This resource box highlights the common ground of Aboriginal Sacred Teachings and the Bible, in the hope of fostering respect and understanding among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.

In traditional aboriginal settings, elders have been the keepers of wisdom and tradition for the nation and passed this down from generation to generation. Elders are still those older people who have vision for the people, are willing to serve their community by sharing their vision, and who work in caring and loving ways toward achieving it. We hope these sessions will supplement the ongoing ministry of elders in Aboriginal communities and that they will introduce this wisdom tradition to many who lack the opportunity of learning directly from Aboriginal Christian elders. While a resource box such as this can never take the place of respectful engagement with the elders, it does set forth a vision for reaching out to God together as Aboriginal and non- Aboriginal Christians.

Tom Yoder Neufeld, Associate Professor of Religious Studies and Peace and Conflict Studies at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ontario, writes in his forward: This resource box is an act of peace in the Spirit of the One who is our peace. Those who have worked on it are inviting us to open ourselves anew to the breadth and length and height and depth of God's wisdom,



and to learn to know the love which goes beyond knowing, beyond words, beyond images, to paraphrase Ephesians 3:18 and 19, but which draws near to all of us, giving us life and salvation. Let us open ourselves to this shared journey upward toward our Creator through moving closer to each other as members of the body of Christ.

The resource box is available for loan or for sale from the Mennonite Church Canada Resource Centre. To preview the material, please check the Resource Centre website at <http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre/ResourceView/14/10154>.

Maskipiton: Peace Chief of the Cree by George McPeck, edited by Pat Pankratz and Elsie Rempel. Illustrations by Nicole Lea.



Maskipiton was a 19th century Plains Cree chief who, after his encounters with a Christian missionary and a Cree elder, was inspired to live a life of peace and forgiveness. Following the example of Jesus, he decided to lead his people on a path of peace, even in the face of evil. Based on actual written accounts by those who were close friends of Chief Maskipiton, it is a story of his love of God's word, his ability to forgive the man who killed his father, and the transformation of a man of violence to a man of peace.

This book is part of the larger Reaching Up to God Our Creator resource box but may be purchased separately from the Mennonite Church Canada Resource Centre.

Teachings of the Sacred Tree by Norman Meade and illustrated by Nicole Lea and Eric Peters.

The Sacred Tree, as presented in this booklet, has been written to compare Aboriginal Sacred Teachings about the Sacred Tree and the Bible's use of trees to proclaim messages of wisdom and healing and hope. This is one way of demonstrating the missional teaching that God was active within the Aboriginal wisdom tradition before missionaries gave Aboriginal people the Bible, and that God's love, righteousness and wisdom are evident within those teachings. The booklet also includes a guide for reflection and response activities/crafts. This booklet is also a part of the larger Reaching Up to God Our Creator resource box but may be purchased separately from the Mennonite Church Canada Resource Centre.



*I will reach my goal.
I believe in myself.
I will go further.
I am important.
I like myself.
I can do this.
Each day is an opportunity.*

—Anonymous

*Wellness in Full Bloom
Healthy eating
Sense of humour
Zest for life
Inner peace
Feeling fit
Giving to others
Time with loved ones*

Pine Dock: The End of an Era

The Pine Dock School first opened in this commercial fishing community along the west shore of Lake Winnipeg in 1940, in a log cabin that had previously been built as a barn. The present frame building was erected in 1965, the same year that Pine Dock joined the newly-formed Frontier School Division. Unfortunately there has been a slow decline in student enrolment over the years and the decision was made to permanently close Pine Dock School. The three students enrolled this past school year were Tesa Monkman (Grade 9), Ethan Selkirk (Grade 8) and Teag Selkirk (Grade 6); Lyn Driedger was



their teacher.

Sunday, June 22, 2008 was the official day that the community, Frontier Division staff, former students, and teachers gathered to mark the official closing. The afternoon began with the graduation of the school's last three students. The students, along with their parents, joined drummers Gary Raven and Bjork Bjarnadottir in a processional entrance into the gym for their graduation ceremony.

Approximately 100 guests were in attendance for the graduation, presentation of awards and the recognition of longtime service by several school committee members and staff. The audience was also treated to some very fine fiddle playing by the students and their instructor Daniel Koulack, his children and Don Benedictson from Riverton.

At the end of the program, the students and their guests were all drummed out of the school to commemorate the ceremonial closure of the school.

The guests then had an opportunity to mingle and reminisce while they enjoyed light refreshments in the classrooms and looked through some of the many pictures and newspaper articles from previous years, including pictures of the original log school.

At five o'clock a catered dinner for approximately 200 people was held in the Pine Dock Community Hall. Before dinner the students and their accompanists played background music while guest were able to view an ongoing slide presentation of former school students and some of the many school trips and activities they had experienced.

Those giving speeches included Frontier School Division representatives, community elder John Selkirk, former pastors Neill and Edith von Gunten, and several past students. A video sending regards from former teacher Tim Horton was also viewed.

No decision has been made yet on the fate of the school building, with its two classrooms and a small gymnasium; however, residents would like to have the building turned over to the community. The school has been the hub of the community and social events revolved around the school. Several residents have mentioned their desire that the Christmas potluck suppers – always held just before the school concert – would continue, as a way for the community to continue to come together to share a good meal and visit.

*Taken from a report by Lyn Driedger
Lac du Bonnet, MB*

Ojibwe Bible

The New Testament was printed in Saulteaux (Ojibwe) syllabics for the first time in 1988 by the Canadian Bible Society. Until then only the Cree Bible was available in syllabics. What a blessing it was to receive the Saulteaux translation at that time. After a couple of months in use, one of the leaders at Pauingassi, Manitoba exclaimed, "I now understand so much that I did not understand from the Cree." Work was being done all along on translating parts of the Old Testament as well. On July 26, 2008 the Ojibwe Bible, with part of the Old Testament, was launched. This is in both the syllabics and in English letters.

We are very grateful to all those that have been involved with the translating, the proofreading, the printing, etc. over the years. We pray that it might be a means of blessing to all those who have been waiting for it. It is selling for \$20.00.

The Ojibwe song book has also been reprinted with a number of additional songs added. It is available for \$12.00.

Obituaries

Hannes Bell of Selkirk, Manitoba, age 86 years, died on Sunday, June 15, 2008 at his home with his family around him. Hannes was born and lived on Hecla Island, where he met his future wife, Winnifred Wood of Manigotagan, and they were married in 1946.

The Bell family resided in Bissett for 14 years and were active members of the Manigotagan Chapel, known as Grace Mennonite Church then. When the family moved to Selkirk in 1966, they opened their home for church services and the fledgling group became the Selkirk Christian Fellowship.

Hannes was employed by the Town of Selkirk until his retirement. He had a love for God, his family and always made new friends wherever he went. Their home was always open to everyone and nothing made him feel better than getting together with his family or his many brothers and sisters to share a good story, laughter, music and a dance. He enjoyed the outdoors and hunting with the boys was his favourite.



He was predeceased by his wife Winniefred, sons Dwight and Barry, two brothers and two sisters. He leaves to cherish his memory his sons, Hannes Jr., Wes (Helen), Miles (Gail), Terry (Joanne), Bruce (Nola) and daughter Lovisa Billington (Kevin); daughter-in-law Lee; 19 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild; two sisters, five brothers, as well as numerous nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

The funeral service was held on Friday, June 20 in the Manigotagan Recreation Hall with Pastor Raymond Settee of Selkirk officiating. Interment followed at the Manigotagan Anglican Cemetery.

Pearl Selkirk (nee Johnston) of Pine Dock, Manitoba, died at the age of 67 years on July 10, 2008, surrounded by her family at the Gimli Community Health Centre, after a courageous battle with cancer.

Pearl was born in Peguis, Manitoba and grew up in Birch Point and Fisher Bay. She attended school in Matheson Island and Winnipeg before marrying Charlie (Chuck) Selkirk of Pine Dock in 1958. They were married 46 years before his death. Family was always very important to Pearl and she enjoyed the noise and laughter around the dining room table at family gatherings. She loved to sew and she made special outfits for each one of her children, baked large batches of bread so each grandchild could take a loaf home, and she was always looking for a good book to read.

Pearl was also active in her community and with the local church. She volunteered her time within the community as a 4-H Leader, served on the Pine Dock School Committee and was a Community Councilor for a number of years and until the time of her passing. She worked as assistant Post Mistress before taking over as Post Mistress in 1977, and was employed as a Home Care worker before retiring in 1994 to care for her husband.

She leaves to mourn her passing her

loving family; son Barry (Irene); daughters, Gwen (Murray) Olafson, Lorri (Michael) Monkman, Cheryl (Shawn) Loane, Dawn (Daryl) Monkman, Jacqueline (Richard) Monkman and Susan (Dean) Klatt; fifteen grandchildren and four great-grandchildren; brothers Edgar and Louis (Joan); sisters, Millie (Frank), Sarah, Vangie (Cliff), Laverne (Eugene); sister-in-law Marge; as well as numerous in-laws, nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

A memorial service to celebrate her life was held on July 17, 2008 at the Pine Dock Community Hall, with Fred Peters officiating. Interment followed at the Pine Dock Cemetery.

Mary Pascal (nee Owen) of Pauingassi, Manitoba passed away in her sleep on the morning of August 9, 2008, at the age of 75 years. She will be dearly missed by her husband George, ten children, and numerous grandchildren, siblings, relatives and friends. She was predeceased by her parents and four children. Allan Owens of Pauingassi officiated.

Elizabeth Pascal (nee Owen), age 79 years of Pauingassi, Manitoba, passed away at the Pine Falls Hospital on August 27, 2008. She had been a resident of a care home in Winnipeg and on the Saageen First Nation. Elizabeth was a very integral part of the church at Pauingassi for many years and will be missed by many, especially her husband Bouchey, three daughters, numerous grandchildren, and one sister. She was predeceased by four children. Allen Owens of Pauingassi officiated.

Dieter Pascal of Pauingassi, Manitoba, passed away at the early age of 24 years, after a brief stay in a Winnipeg hospital. He was a very promising person and will be very much missed by his family and friends. Dieter's mother, Lillian, and her three daughters are residing in Island Lake. His father Roderick, the chief of the Pauingassi band at one time as well as a leader in the church for a short time, passed away in 2001. Interment took

place in Island Lake.

Anna Margaret Clark of Manigotagan, Manitoba passed away at the Health Sciences Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba on Sunday, August 31, 2008 at the age of 59 years. Anna was originally from the nearby Hollow Water First Nation but for the last number of years she had resided in Manigotagan with her husband Lynn Clark, known to some as "Shorty".

Wake services were held at the residence of Ken Moneyas in Hollow Water from Wednesday to Friday, with the funeral on Saturday, September 6, 2008, led by Norman Meade and Henry Neufeld.

As was expressed at the funeral, Anna was a dedicated and faithful servant of the Lord, to her family, to the church, and to her community. In the last number of years, right up to her demise, Anna attended the Manigotagan Community Chapel faithfully. She will surely be missed at church. Only her spirit will now fill that empty chair, and more recently, that empty space on the floor that occupied her wheel chair. However, the congregation feels blessed in that Anna's strong spirit will live on for many years to come. The congregation would like to thank Anna for her spiritual and biblical counsel over the years. Anna knew her Bible well and was the spiritual guidance and conscience for all that knew her.

Anna will be missed by her family, by the congregation, and by her friends in these communities. God bless you, Anna.

As the poem in your obituary stated:
I Am Free

Don't grieve for me, for now I am free.
I am following the path God has laid you see.

I took His hand when I heard His call,
I turned my back and left it all.

I could not stay another day,

To laugh, to love, to work or play.

Tasks left undone must stay that way,

I found the peace at the close of day.

If my parting has left a void,



Then fill it with remembered joys,
A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss,
O' yes, these things too, I will miss.
Be not burdened with times of sorrow,
My life's been full, I savored much,
Good friends, good times, a loved one's
touch.

Perhaps my time seemed all too brief,
Don't lengthen it now with undue grief.
Lift up your hearts, and peace to thee.
God wanted me now; He set me free.

*Norman Meade
Winnipeg, Manitoba*

Events Calendar

October 18, 2008

Manitoba Partnership Circle meeting.

July 14-19, 2009

Mennonite World Conference, Assembly Gathered, Asuncion, Paraguay.

July 19-25, 2009 (dates tentative)

Visit the Indigenous communities and churches of the Paraguayan Chaco.

For more events visit
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.



A Note from Native Ministry...
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imiller@mennonitechurch.ca

In the Image

I have friends who live in Fond du Lac, a small isolated community on the north shore of Lake Athabasca. The distance from Prince Albert is about 1000 kilometers. Over the years I have visited there a number of times, by truck (crossing Athabasca on the ice road) and by air. An attempt by motorcycle was aborted in deep sand beyond Points North.

One such trip found me there in late November. I discovered myself, at one point, sitting in a home with a half dozen men, conversing over mugs of coffee. Actually, "conversing" isn't quite accurate, because chatting was mostly in Dene. One fellow, who had lived "down south" for a time, and was more aware of "down south" etiquette, repeated stories in English for my benefit.

Fond du Lac, like a number of northern communities, is a reserve that faces significant struggles. Despite the isolation, or because of it, the fragile Dene culture is besieged by the dominant southern culture, which bombards the reserve with reminders that the good life is found in things such as soft drinks, junk food, satellite TV, alcohol and illegal drugs. Cultural confusion is linked to violence, addiction, abuse, a high death rate, and much sadness. Certainly, in this circle of men who made a place for me, hints of that struggle could be read in their faces. Yet laughter came often as outrageous stories were shared.

The house faced to the south toward the shore of Lake Athabasca. A cutting November wind gusted wisps of snow between huge boulders, across new ice, creating a bleak scene beyond the large window. Into that picture, an old man shuffled, hood drawn up, shoulders hunched. He made his way slowly to the lake's edge, and began gingerly but doggedly to walk out onto the thin ice. He obviously had a purpose.

I noted that the conversation in the warm room had stopped. The men had also noted the scene outside. Into the silence, with a gesture at the

man who seemed so determined, I naively asked, "what's he doing out there?"

A number of responses were offered and translated. The walker on the ice had been sick for some time, had grown somewhat frail. He was now unable to hunt, and so his supply of caribou meat for the coming winter was undoubtedly meager. With some urgency, he was checking the ice thickness, to see how soon he could set his fishing nets in order to feed himself.

As I listened to the stories, as I "felt" the stories being offered to me, I became aware of something else going on. The story being played out on the ice in front of us seemed to serve as a reminder to this cluster of men that this represented a need. In the words, in the translations, and again, in the feeling in the room, I sensed that when there was enough snow for snowmobiles and toboggans to again go north, when the herds were found, meat would appear on this old man's doorstep.

There was no fanfare. There was no rushing out to convince the elderly gentleman that he would be cared for, that he could now return to safe ground. There was no drawing up of schedules, "I'll go next week and then it's your turn." Neither was there paperwork for him to fill in to prove his need, no worker to call. There was simply, in the stoic faces around me, an acceptance of duty.

I realized that I have received a gift. I had been offered a glimpse of something holy. I had been reminded that a generous God was present in the culture of this barren wind-swept community long before the white man, long before the Christian church, appeared. This community, this people, this fragile culture, carries a measure of that which is created "very good," if we but wait quietly for the invitation to experience it.

*Ed Olfert
Prince Albert, SK*

