



INDIGENEWS

The Jesus Way in Indigenous Context
Winter Issue 2015



NĚSTOOĀĀK: RENEWING FAITH

**You've helped make
our NĚstooāāk a
great success!**

The setting was perfect and the Tipi Experience was integral to the learning. That is what the attendees were saying after a weekend of participating in workshops, sharing meals and getting to know all the people who gathered with us and shared the issues they face today as Indigenous peoples in Canada. Dorothy Wright*, Cree from Slave Lake in the northern Alberta area told her incredible life journey, her walk with Creator and how she is now working with young people and trauma issues they face. It was heart wrenching but full of hope.

**Dorothy's great grand father was one of the original signatories to Treaty 8.*



Renewing Community

One-on-one does not have to be a cup of coffee in a quiet corner of a quaint bistro/deli/donut shop. It can take place amongst and above the roar of a chain saw. Sharing the routine events of life in the midst of Creator's magnificent creation is a great setting to live out, and talk about, Jesus. Tom and Karen Bursma's love for their community truly embodies the life of My People ministries.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.
Jn 10:10 (NRSV)



Inspire Justice

October 16 Terry opened the Inspire Justice conference in prayer. He also spoke on a discussion panel with Wendy Petersen at the EFC Day in Winnipeg, Manitoba the following week.



What's Love Got to Do with It?

Toronto, October 24th - What's Love Got to Do With It conference attendees loved Terry's presentation.

One attendee summed up the day as "an incredible & in-depth history lesson of the Native people from the time the Europeans first interacted with them. Much of what he taught is not known by most Canadians and it was heart touching as well as informative, which led to dialogue throughout the day. We were privileged as well to have Terry drum & sing for us, creating a sacred space. People felt it was the first time they heard the whole story...with more understanding of the issues going on today in native communities. "

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From the Director

Just as I was finishing my thoughts for this newsletter, Paris happened!

Here was yet another expression of human capacity for inhumanity toward one another, of how past grievances and wrongs create a powder keg of emotion, waiting to be lighted. It was an example, like Beirut before it, like Kenya before that, like Nigeria before that, like the Philippines before that, like the Residential Schools before them, like...so many others before them...of just how much we need our hope renewed, our faith restored, and human identity reclaimed. In the midst of inhumanity and suffering, we need to recover the image of our Creator, placed in us in the beginning, intended so that we might live in a good way. Only as we see our Creator's image in others, and ourselves can we begin to treat one another with dignity and respect.

Paris was yet another reminder of that deep need.

The season of the year fast approaches where we acknowledge the gift of hope, of the renewal of faith, of the incarnation of God's full likeness in human form – when God became a two-legged and walked among us! Here, at this time of year, we reflect on the perfect likeness of both God and humanity entering a damaged creation so that it might experience the fulfilment of God's intentions. The living message of the person, work, life, teaching, death, and resurrection of Jesus was and still is the Creator's means to undertake this task. It must also be ours.

In the coming year in our work, and the themes of our newsletters, we will be re-committing ourselves as instruments of restoration, renewal, and reclamation. In the locations and situations in which we find ourselves we want to speak and live the message of the Christ Mass found in John's gospel – "I have come that you might have life, and have it more abundantly!"

Beginning with this year's #GivingTuesday campaign (something new to us) we want to use memes (small media ideas and images) to remind you of our work and to affirm that you make it all possible. Memes with our central messages of renew, restore, and reclaim will serve as a reminder to you during the #GivingTuesday campaign and throughout the year that, together, we can make a difference.

Restore, Renew, Reclaim!

MEET OUR STAFF

Tom and Karen Bursma, married 38 years, are originally from Michigan, have four adult children and three grandsons. For fifteen summers they and their family were part of a group offering a week of day club in a First Nation community in the French River area of Ontario, Canada. Their initial role as participants grew into leadership of the group; promotion/recruiting, training and directing. For five years they assisted in launching a "Gathering" - First Nation fellowship/church - in Michigan.



Twelve years ago they moved to the French River area where they now spend their lives living among the people, presenting and representing Jesus in all facets of life.

There are now day clubs on four reserves with four different volunteer groups. In their role as Pastor they lead Gatherings on two of these reserves, perform marriage ceremonies, conduct funeral services and significantly, are accepted and requested as a spiritual resource in the communities. Honoured as virtual community members they are active in many, if not most, reserve functions and activities; often with formal responsibilities in the event.

iEmergence Philippines Reclaiming Tradition

Family support is an important protective factor for childbearing women. This is what twenty-five youth leaders who attended the conversation on Tagakolu traditional birthing last September 18-20, 2015 in Kalatagan, Malita learned from their elders.

The conversation on traditional birthing is part of the Indigenous Youth Leadership (IYL) – Tagakolu curriculum. The youth in the community expressed that they wanted to learn how their "mananamok" (Tagakolu traditional birth attendant) prepares when a woman gives birth and to understand the process of traditional birthing. The village midwife shared: "In traditional birthing, one important factor is the support given by the elders to the expectant mother that gives her the courage to welcome the birth with all her being."



NAITS Reclaiming Lives



On October 26 to 30, one of our NAIITS students who is also an Indigenous Pathways board member, Marc Levasseur, had been invited to complete a special Executive Certificate on the subject of Reconciliation, conflict prevention and the promotion of a more inclusive society with the Institute for the Study of International Development at McGill University.

The background subject was the crisis that is facing the Canada in the relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous population and the need for reconciliation. Very strategic speakers and well-involved teachers came as Dr. Marie Wilson from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, the former Prime Minister Joe Clark and the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs of Quebec, Geoffrey Kelly only to name a few.

As discussed throughout the course, Christians who work to re-Indigenize their spirituality and fight back the assimilation that came within the Western Evangelization are part of the front line to work on the reconciliation throughout Canada. Reconciliation would not come with homogenization or assimilation of the Canadian or American society but through the acceptance of our diversity and one of them is well expressed in the Native Christianity. Indigenous Pathways is one of the organizations who desire to see reconciliation coming. That certificate has also been a good moment of connection between our organization, McGill University and other participants.

My People Inenimowin Circle: Restoring Faith

One of the things we discuss with women at the Inenimowin Circle and on Tuesday nights in Billings, Montana is that when abuse happens someone else has done something wrong and yet we feel illegitimate shame for it. We distinguish between legitimate shame when we have done something wrong, for which we need to repent and illegitimate shame that attacks our personal worth and tells us something not true and bad about who we are. Too many people bear scars of illegitimate shame.

During Inenimowin and weekly meetings in our community we talk about stories behind the scars. We talk about the emotions and the pain. We listen to women who have never told anyone before. We cry together and grieve. And we talk about a Friend who took up our pain, who bore our sorrow, who knew what it was to be innocent and to carry another's shame, and who heals us by His wounds. By His grace, He is changing lives.

"I've been in and out of treatment centers, but I have never dealt with my childhood trauma. This came at just the right time for me," states one woman during our meeting.



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PO Box 181 Carlisle
ON L0R 1H0 Canada

PO Box 130061 St. Paul
MN 55113 USA

PH: 1.866.724.0352 Email: info@indigenouspathways.com

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PO Box 181 Carlisle, ON, Canada L0R 1H0 | PO Box 130061, St. Paul, MN 55113-0001, USA | Phone/Fax: +1.888.704.3824 | Email: info@indigenouspathways.com

December 1, 2015

#GivingTuesday is coming to Indigenous Pathways!

#GivingTuesday refers to the Tuesday following U.S.Thanksgiving, which this year is December 1st.
#GivingTuesday is a social media movement to create a national day of giving to kick off the giving season. It was started as a response to commercialization and consumerism in the post-Thanksgiving season mainly Black Friday and Cyber Monday.

We will be promoting Indigenous Pathways on Facebook and Twitter and we would love you to share with your friends and family and have them share as well. Join us and share on Facebook or Twitter our #GivingTuesday campaign.

