

Indigenous Peoples Ministries

Western Canada Presbytery
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IPM-WCP



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Dear Beloved in Christ,

We thank our God for your prayers and support through the years in the gospel ministry having had the opportunity to serve in the United States, Australia, Canada and now within the First Nations community in Canada,

We have been overwhelmed by the fact that it is only the grace of God that accounts for anyone desiring to pursue a relationship with the God who has revealed Himself in the Scriptures. It is necessary to qualify which God because many who say that they have a relationship with God, after hearing them describe who this god is to them, it is not the God who has revealed Himself in the Scriptures. Rather it is too often a god who condones their sinful compromises, a god of convenience who does not require them to change, or to deny themselves or perhaps even suffer.

North American evangelism or outreach has become influenced by the science of marketing far more than we would care to admit. In many ways “the North American” church is so trained and sophisticated in its “attractual” model that it need not “wait” upon the Lord or rely upon His Spirit. When the outcomes do not meet our expectations then we become frustrated and search for better “techniques” or “methodologies.” We have “schools” for everything. We want to see results (which is normal) but we want to see them now.

In spite of this, the Lord Jesus loves His Church, entered this world to redeem Her, sacrificed His life for Her and awaits the day when She, the Bride of Christ, is complete, the very last saint, has placed their faith in Him.

*⁴⁷ For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, "I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth."⁴⁸ And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. **Acts 13:47-48***

What I have found is that each sub-culture, be it secularistic or animistic, is embedded with its own highly resistant strongholds, barriers and obstacles towards the gospel. Those strongholds, barriers and obstacles may not be penetrable to us, but they are to God.

*⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." **Mark 10:45***

*³ For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. ⁵ We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, ⁶ being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete. **2***

Corinthians 10:3-6

A First Nations Elder from a church on the Reserve shared with me last night that he recently attended a wake in his community when a Medicine man rose to speak and ranted about how evil Jesus is. The First Nations/Native American community for most of the previous century suffered greatly at the hands of government-church run residential schools in which there was widespread physical, sexual, mental abuse, small children taken from their homes and communities, many never to see their parents again. The devil will not allow that memory to disappear so quickly and so easily.

I suspect that many (not all) of the adults who do attend church on the Reserve do so for materially opportunistic reasons. I know of some who come to church and then go to the sweat lodge, or practice smudging, to cover all the basis. The good news is that when they do come to church on the Reserve they are hearing the gospel clearly explained and receive the blessing of the generosity from the Christian community that surrounds them...even from you. One day the Holy Spirit will open their eyes and hearts.

Salvation is a gift from God. We are Ambassadors for Christ, with the ministry and message of reconciliation. ***2 Corinthians 5:18-20***

Praise the Lord that we have access to interact with youth on the Reserve. To build friendships with them and allow them to know Jesus and His Church who is different from what their parents, grandparents and great-grandparents experienced from Residential schools.

I occasionally get the opportunity to preach in the churches on the Reserve. I have also been asked by the Pastor at the Maskwacis Bible Fellowship Church to help them obtain their own registered charity status with the Canadian government as well as help train leaders.

In early October Carole and I attempted to start a tutoring program for elementary age youth out of the Montana Band office. We had a number of youth come through but there were none who continued. We decided not to continue at this location as the portion of the building that classroom was in had no heat. We have decided to move tutoring to the Maskwacis Bible Fellowship building and offer it to youth and adults who

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attend the churches. We will do that after the first of the year. Please pray that we can establish this ministry within the community. Reading proficiency is very low even amongst adults which hinders their ability to engage God's word, to feed themselves or mature.

The Maskwacis Bible Fellowship Church and Louis Bull All Nations Church are combining efforts to reach more youth on the Reserve. A young lady from Central Alberta Youth Unlimited (Youth for Christ) is heading this up. It will involve intergenerational small groups. Please pray for Sarah, she is raising support to do this ministry full-time, and pray for Christian adults who will gather around her and join her in this ministry.

Our 2018 Summer Missions Weeks at the Maskwacis Reserve are scheduled for: Montana & Louis Bull Bands, 7-14 July; Samson Band, 14-21 July. This is a huge opportunity to be involved in the ministry of reconciliation, building friendships and trust with the First Nations people from the "outside" world. You have an open invitation!

The Maskwacis Bible Fellowship Church needs a larger septic holding tank. This will enable them to be able to host larger events and host summer missions teams. The tank that is in there now is only a couple of hundred gallons. It is very expensive to empty on a frequent basis, especially when the truck can handle ten times the amount for the same cost. The soil is clay so drain tiles cannot be used. The church is on private property, deeded to it, so there are no government or band handouts. So far I have received \$1400 in commitments. Any help would be greatly appreciated!

If you would like to help out you can send your donation and receive a tax receipt for 2017 to...

In Canada

Western Canada Presbytery
14304 - 96 Avenue NW
Edmonton, AB T5N 0C4
designate: MFBC septic tank fund

or designate to our ongoing ministry:
Bert Gibson support account

A most blessed Christmas to all!



Bert & Carole Gibson

In the US

Mission to the World
PO Box 744165
Atlanta, GA 30374-4165
designate: #97435 CA Maskwacis Bible
Fellowship Church

designate: #97438 Gibson support