

Indigenous Peoples Ministries

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Beloved in Christ,

25 March 2018

We are entering our fourth month of tutoring at the Maskwacis Bible Fellowship Church (MBFC). Early in January a lady from Edmonton contacted Mission to the World (MTW) about the ministry on the Maskwacis Reserve. I contacted her and she expressed an interest in what we are doing on the Reserve. Darlene was an answer to prayer for help. She is a trained speech pathologist and has been a great addition. She has especially connected well with a nine year old student who is unable to read. He had come to tutoring with a defeatist attitude but in a few short weeks has demonstrated an eagerness to learn. Darlene has been the perfect person to work with him.

Carole is working with three older youth (two 11 year old girls & one 12 year old boy) and I am working with two nine year old boys. We have been helping them develop good reading and math skills. We have been told by the students that it has made a difference in their performance in school, improved their grades on the most recent report cards.

The three older youth live with their grandmother ("kookum") and have recently begun to attend church and youth group at the MBFC because they have connected with us.

We have been on a "learning curve" with the curriculum that we are using. Our next goal is to introduce "learning stations" in which each student will work more independently on their skills at their own pace. Please **PRAY** for a smooth transition for us.

For the most part the family system on the Reserve is not adequately equipped to support youth in developing basic learning skills. Many of the "families" consist of five to ten children, often no father is present or addictions have necessitated that the children be placed with grandparents or into the foster care system. Children experience constant displacement. Failure to become educated to the point of being able to

function in society is to be sentenced to a life of poverty and despair, hence the extraordinary suicide rates amongst young indigenous adults.

There, too, are many adults who would benefit from tutoring. Parents with good skills can help children. Please **PRAY** that the Lord would provide more tutors so that we can expand the tutoring to include adults.

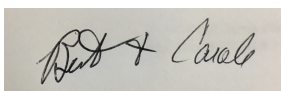
We have also been involved in the weekly (teenage) youth gatherings on Tuesday evenings and have seen that group enjoy numerical growth. A meal is being provided and they have been working through the Youth Alpha material. Last weekend they spent the weekend away in the Rockies on a “winter camping” trip. Camping in the snow. Hearty souls they are.

I have preached more frequently in the past few months filling in for men who are away or ill. That is always a joy.

We would also ask you to **PRAY** for the Summer Ministry/Missions projects. To date I have only one church who has committed to come and I do not know exactly how many people that is and when they are coming. (7-14th July or 14-21 July) I have had a few people verbally say that they are coming but nothing definite. We are hoping to provide a Summer Ministry/Missions team for the first time to the Samson band (the largest on the Reserve) site (in addition to the Montana and Louis Bull sites we’ve been on for quite a few years). At this point I do not have any “hard” commitments in hand. **PRAY** that the Lord in time would provide.

The willingness of Christian groups to come and engage with people on the Reserve does not go unnoticed. It is tangible proof that God loves them and counteracts the lingering bitterness that was the result of past harm done by Residential schools imposed by the Federal government and poorly administered by the institutional church.

He is risen!! Grace and peace to you all!

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bert & Carole".

Bert & Carole