

Cheryl Bear Tour

Presbytery of Kamloops

March 2009

Many thanks to the Healing and Reconciliation Fund for supporting our Cheryl Bear Tour through the Cariboo and Okanagan. It was a fabulous couple of weeks and with each event, we saw Creator at work in various ways. I'd like to give you a summary of the events with comments on each one. With each summary I will note the attendance. This figure does not include the Bear/Barnetsons or our family, together which make up another 10 people.

This report will not include the 'where will we go from here' portion. We expect to have a discussion at the next Presbytery of Kamloops meeting in June in order to discuss as a whole group what follow-up activities might be planned. I can comment on what we will do in the Cariboo, but I will send a brief supplementary report after the June Presbytery meeting.

Here's what we did....



Saturday, March 7: The Bear/Barnetsons arrived in Quesnel from Bella Coola.

1:00 pm **workshop** for all the churches in Quesnel on First Nations Issues. This was hosted by the Baptist church and advertised through the ministerial. A welcome was brought by the local band's young princess. Gifts were exchanged. It was an excellent workshop and the attendance was lower than we hoped but there was a good discussion. The ideas presented 'pushed the envelope' for a number of people there. Several local First Nations people also attended.

Attendance: approx 25

Sunday, March 8: 10:30 am Cheryl and Randy led **worship at Bethel Pentecostal Church** in Quesnel. Sundays I usually lead a Native house church in Quesnel, so that Sunday we just joined in with the service at Bethel. The Bear/Barnetsons led worship with drums, dance, chants

and guitars. Randy preached a challenging sermon. This was followed by a BBQ lunch. There was a wonderful sense of God's spirit at work through the service. The host pastor seemed to be challenged by the event and we hope to have further discussions with him. The whole thing was really well received and people from other churches attended.

Attendance: approx. 100 +

6:30 pm **concert at the Nazko Valley Community Centre** hosted by the Nazko and Area Dakelh Outreach (NADO). We had a good mix of Native and non-Native people. One of my neighbours clapped so hard she burst a blood vessel in her hand. Another little girl took home a CD and was so moved by the Residential School song that she sang it continually for weeks after. (Her mother began to consider smashing the CD as she was so tired of hearing it over and over!)

Attendance: 50





Monday, March 9: we drove to **Lhoosk'uz village** and visited with community members during a lunch. Our event was coordinated with the nurses from the Friendship Centre coming out for a workshop and lunch. After lunch we had a welcome from local elders and a **concert**. The culture teacher and students also presented their hoop dancing and drumming and singing to Cheryl and family. This is a very remote village and a challenging road to travel. We had a tour of the village (all dozen houses) before returning to Nazko.

Attendance: the whole village - 30

Note for interest: Cheryl and Randy and boys live full-time in a motorhome. On Monday night the temperature in Nazko dipped to -37 °C and their heater gave out. There was no school the next day, but I called the parents in the community and almost all the kids in the school showed up so they could come to Bible Class that day.

Tuesday, March 10: 2:30 – 4:30 pm Bible Class at Nazko. We



combined both our Bible Classes and Cheryl taught the kids various clan dances, giving each a chance to sit at the drum or use the rattle while singing. We had our regular snacks and crafts as well. Cheryl told them about the clans, her bear clan blanket and they all tried on the bear mask. She taught them 4 principles of honour: Honour the Creator, Honour the Earth, Honour our Elders and Honour Yourself.



Attendance: the whole school except 4 kids: 16

The temperature went down to only -30 °C this night, but they all moved into our office building for the night. By the time we left for Quesnel the next morning, the RV was at -10 °C inside. They got the heater fixed on Thursday!

6:00 pm Pot luck dinner at our place. This event was planned so that Cheryl and Randy would have some specific time with the members of our house churches. We shared a meal together and visited. After dinner, we had some great teaching and instruction on drumming on our big pow wow drum.

Attendance: 6 + our families

Wednesday, March 11: Quesnel High Schools.

10:30 am Correlieu Secondary School Cheryl and family did a great presentation for the whole school. They talked about the clan system, played their music and danced. Cheryl shared stories of residential schools and her grandfather's village which had been destroyed by a dam project. She balanced the sad stories with the humour and fun of some of her other songs. They gave an invitation for First Nations youth to join with their drum and dance teams who go overseas regularly. Both schools provided great opportunities to interact with students afterwards as well.



Attendance: approx 4-500

12:00 pm **Quesnel Secondary School.** The Aboriginal Education staff arranged a lunch for us and visited with us all before the 1:30pm presentation at that school for all the grade 8-10 students. This resulted in the Bear/Barnetsons being invited back for an event in May that the Ab Ed programme is running called "Honouring Your Health".



Attendance: approx 3-400

Thursday, March 12: a day for major repairs to the motorhome.

Friday, March 13: 7:00 pm concert at Quesnel Tillicum Friendship Centre. Because Cheryl had been to so many other venues through the week, word had spread and we packed the Friendship centre for this concert. It was a wonderful mix of Native and non-Native people. A whole group of youth from a

treatment centre came. Jon had some significant conversations with a couple of people who are dealing with residential school experiences. Cheryl and Randy sold more CD's per capita than was normal so many people will be listening to the message at home. In the coming week there will be a report on this concert and the other local events in the Quesnel newspaper. I took the opportunity to write about it for the pastor's corner.

Attendance: 115



Saturday, March 14: This was a day off for both families as we made our way up to Prince George for the Sunday service. Randy and Cheryl made it, but my daughters and I didn't. We were involved in a 4 vehicle accident on our way and had to return home to Nazko. Our truck sustained \$16,000 damage, but all 7 people and 2 dogs in the accident had no serious injuries. We are grateful. It did complicate our journey a little and meant that we missed the service in Prince George.

Sunday, March 15: 10:30 am led worship service at St. Giles', Prince George. Cheryl and Randy led the worship singing and Randy preached an excellent sermon. Herb Hilder, the minister there was really pleased with how things went. The congregation responded well.

Attendance: unknown.



Wednesday, March 18: 7:00 pm concert in Lac La Hache. This was planned at the last minute as we had tried to do something on a reserve in the South Cariboo which didn't work out. I had assumed it would be more of a white church event, as there is no reserve in the immediate area. However, we packed the little church and there were a relatively large number of First Nations people there. Charlie McNeil likened the experience to Acts 2 where all the people heard the gospel proclaimed in their own language. It was a fabulous night and was really enjoyed by everyone who came. The next morning the McNeil/Finley household hosted the Bear/Barnetsons and our family for a big breakfast. It gave us more opportunity to informally talk about some Native ministry issues.

Attendance: 50

Thursday, March 19: 5:30 pm **dinner hosted by St. Andrew's Armstrong** for the core group hosting the evening event and our two families. The missionary families split up and shared at tables with the local congregational members.

8:00 pm **concert at St. Andrew's Armstrong.** Wendy Adams went to great lengths to connect



with all the local bands to invite them to this event and it paid off. The church was packed including extra seating that had been set up to the side of the pews. It was the best attended event in the church over the past 4 years. A welcome to Secwepemc territory was brought by a local band member. Attempts to have chiefs or councilors come to do that resulted in no one following through, so an elder was asked at the spur of the moment. People attended from other local churches as well as the Presbyterian Church in Salmon Arm and NAIM missionaries from Salmon Arm area. There was a great mix of Native and non-Native people who visited together afterward. There

was even a group of 16 people from the Round Lake Treatment Centre who came for an evening out.

It was a powerful evening of stories, dance and song. We were able to share about the PCC's confession and later several people requested copies of it. Some people had their eyes opened to the issues of residential schools in a totally new way.

Attendance: 95

Friday, March 20: 7:30 pm **concert at St. Andrew's Kamloops.** A friend from the Kamloops Indian Band agreed to bring a welcome to the territory and she said that in her knowledge, that evening was the first time that Native people had been invited into one of the churches in Kamloops for such an event. This was greatly significant. There were a number of other First Nations people there. One young woman came who was marking the anniversary of the suicide of her mother. Normally she spent that day drunk, but chose to come to the concert instead. Cheryl spoke about the pain of suicide that evening and the young woman went home with great hope. Cheryl had no idea of this when she shared. Another white man came in on his way home from a bar and heard the music from the street. Pastor Harold Wiest had the chance to share the hope of Christ with him and expects to see him back at the church again. Harold made good contacts and put out a real effort to draw in local bands. Although he didn't see Native ministry as a focus of their congregational ministry, it was a good event. The down side was that most of the work fell to the minister and the session wasn't as invested as they could have been.

Attendance: 75



Note: In Kamloops and Penticton, a former Bible student of Cheryl and Randy's, now a pastor himself, joined us and spoke at each event. Papa Joe and his wife Janet, a language teacher, shared of experiences in residential school and of the Christian faith they now follow. They made a profound addition to the events.

Saturday, March 21: 1:00 pm **workshop at St. Andrew's Penticton.** Although the turnout was very small, the people gathered for this workshop were really enthusiastic and in tune with the

issues. It was basically the same workshop as in Quesnel. We only got through a portion of it in the allotted time as the group enjoyed so much discussion.

Attendance: 6

7:30 pm **concert at St. Andrew's Penticton.** This concert was not as well-attended as others. The minister had some discomfort in approaching local chiefs and band councillors as he was concerned to not do it in an offensive way. Posters were distributed all over town. However, those who came enjoyed the evening. One group of First Nations people came who were from a Carrier village near Cheryl's home and were cousins of Cheryl's. In fact, Armstrong was the only place that we went that Cheryl didn't have some cousins show up!

Attendance: 40



Attendance: approx 40

Sunday, March 22: 11:00 am worship service at St. Andrew's Penticton. Cheryl and Randy and family led the service, sharing in song, chant, and dance with Randy preaching. I gave a children's story about a Carrier boy incorporating cultural elements. Although some people found the music too loud, they really enjoyed the service overall. The minister Colin Cross found that the events over the weekend were 'profound consciousness-raisers'. This congregation is just on the cusp of starting a new work with street people in the community which will include many First Nations. It was helpful to show that very positive side of Native life and culture as well as growing understanding of the pain they carry.

Other noteworthy items:

- *At each event Cheryl and Randy set up an information table about their ministry. They are faith-based and rely on whatever support they raise. They had a sign-up for their e-newsletter, contact cards and information on their international teams. They also had CD's and jewelry for sale. We also had an opportunity at each event for an offering. They really like Presbyterians as, by the end of their time with us, between their honourarium, CD and jewelry sales and offerings, they left with enough money to purchase their tickets to minister in Russia in the Fall.*
- *Just in the second week of the tour (Okanagan portion) we put on 2,000 km in just 6 days!*

Cheryl Bear Tour **Financial Report** **April 2009**

Honourarium to the Bear/Barnetsons (all travel costs included)	\$3,000.00
Advertising	113.44
Protocol gifts	214.14
Travel for Bell/Wyomingas *	1517.36
Hall rentals	155.00
Total:	\$4999.94

We hoped that you didn't need us to return the extra \$0.06!

* During the first week of the tour, there were no costs for travel as we used the Cariboo church truck and absorbed the cost in our congregational budget. However, after the accident we had to use our own car. We clocked our km and charged \$0.35/km to the tour budget up to the amount left in the budget and then charged the rest to the Cariboo. We were fortunate that accommodations were provided for us in Kamloops and Penticton at no cost so we could offset that way.