

# NORTHERN LIGHT

The Official Newsletter of

## The Cariboo Presbyterian Church

PO Box 156, Lac la Hache B.C. V0K 1T0

Visit our website: <http://www.cariboopresbyterianchurch.bc.ca>

Editor: Jon Wyminga

Autumn Edition 2016

### A Walk or Two Down Memory Lane

#### **Back to the he Beginning:** Diane Osborne

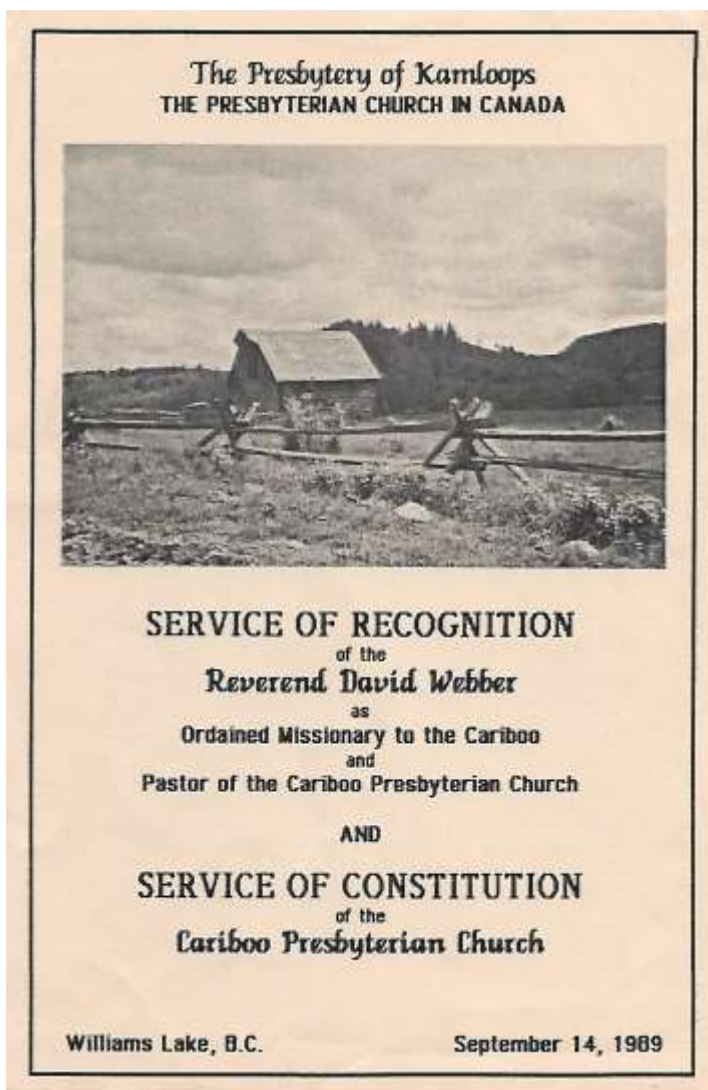
*(Editor's Note: Several months ago I received this submission in the mail from one of our supporters. I'd like to extend a special thanks to Diane for these wonderful recollections of a time long ago.)*

It was September 1989!! Sixteen Presbyterians, mainly from the Toronto area, were making a 5,020 kilometer journey through each of the four presbyteries in British Columbia. The highlight of our trip was the Service of Recognition for the missionary, the Rev. David Webber, and the formation of the Cariboo Presbyterian Church on September 14, 1989.

Some months prior the Rev. Bob Garvin, at that time Superintendent of Mission for British Columbia, had spoken at Weston Presbyterian Church, Toronto, at a mission Sunday focusing on new work in British Columbia. The session had invited Bob to speak which was encouraged by a member of our congregation and his brother, the Rev. Murray Garvin who, at that time, was Secretary of Education for Mission of the Board of World Missions of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. A number of members at Weston were so intrigued they asked Murray to organize a tour of the churches of British Columbia focusing on the formation service in the Cariboo.

The tour started at Toronto airport on September 1<sup>st</sup> and took us to Creston, Cranbrook, Nelson, Castlegar, Slocan, Slocan Park, Armstrong, Penticton, Langley, Vancouver, St. Andrew's Hall, Saanich, Victoria, Duncan, Nanaimo, Port Alberni, Parksville, Campbell River, Qualicum Beach, Port Hardy, Prince Rupert, Kitimat, Prince George, Vanderhoof, Williams Lake, Kamloops and Salmon Arm. We visited both well-established congregations as well as aid-receiving ones. Of course, we did sightseeing along the way. We even went on the reactionary ferry in the Cariboo!

On September 14<sup>th</sup> we were in Williams Lake and gathered for supper at The Williams Lake Golf Club with founding members of the Cariboo



Presbyterian Church, members of the Presbytery of Kamloops and other interested persons from across the province. We then attended at the United Church in Williams Lake for the 'Service of Recognition' of the Reverend David Webber as Ordained Missionary of the Cariboo and Pastor of the Cariboo Presbyterian Church and the 'Service of Constitution' of the Cariboo Presbyterian Church.



Seventy-five people attended the service and reception afterwards. Congratulations were offered and presentations of financial support were given. Our group was delighted to be part of the gathering. We were all deeply moved to be witnessing the establishment of this new congregation and to share in the vision of the new ministry. Greetings were read from many congregations along with the presentation of donations raised over and above Presbyterians Sharing commitments. The Synod of B.C. had stepped out in faith to fund this new ministry as there were no funds available from the Board of World Mission for regular funding until 1991. Arising out of the conviction of the validity of the ministry and concern to commence such a ministry, over half of the congregations in British Columbia had given or pledged financial support. In faith that the congregations of B.C. would support the work not only in 1989 but also in 1990, the Board of World Mission had appointed David Webber as missionary to the Cariboo effective August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1989. It was looked upon as a pilot project that might become the model for much rural ministry in Canada.

It will be twenty-seven years this September since we went on our journey. I have watched with interest and great pleasure at the continuation and expansion of the work of the Cariboo Presbyterian

Church through the years. I receive the newsletter regularly and have used the monthly planner for many years. It is a constant reminder of the Cariboo, of our trip, and of the amazing work still being carried out. May God continue to bless the many facets of the work of the Cariboo Presbyterian Church and all the people involved.

*Diane Osborne is a member of the Weston Presbyterian Church in West Toronto.*

### **Old Stomping Grounds: Jon Wyminga**

*(Editor's Note: Back in 1989 God was getting the Cariboo ministry started. In Toronto at the same time God was preparing Shannon and me for the Cariboo.)*

Last May Shannon and I were in Ontario for several weeks. We were flown there by the Presbyterian Church in Canada for various meetings but we also stayed for a few weeks of holidays. It gave me the opportunity to visit some old stomping grounds from many years ago. I went back to Unionville and Markham where I grew up. I saw the house I lived in when I was a teenager. I saw the schools I attended. I walked the streets that were once so familiar but have dramatically changed over time. Later Shannon and I attended the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion of our graduation from Knox College in Toronto. At about the same time we also visited some Cariboo ministry supporters from Knox Presbyterian Church just a few blocks away. We were members at Knox Church while we were students at Knox College.

Clearly the most stirring part of our walk down memory lane was dropping in at the Scott Mission in Toronto. It's about a ten minute walk south of Knox Church on Spadina Ave. and about ten minutes southwest of Knox College. For a few short years in the late 1980s it seemed like much of our lives were marked out by that small triangle of real estate between those three buildings. We studied at Knox College, we attended worship at Knox Church but we always felt like we cut our teeth for ministry at the Scott Mission. That is where we learned to love and serve people in the name of Jesus.

We lived in a small apartment in the building, our first as a married couple. I opened the Mission every morning and locked it up every night. We coordinated and often led chapel services on Sunday for the many street people we served. At various points during our time there we hosted a drop in ministry, worked in children's programs, delivered Meals on Wheels and visited shut-ins. We were

privileged to work with many amazing people, all committed to serving the urban poor in the name of Jesus Christ.

We were thrilled to learn that some of those people are still at the Mission. When we dropped in we met Lois Markovic who used to work with us in the children's ministry 30 years ago. Now she's the director of Women's Ministry. Back when we were there Lois' mom Elaine, her dad Mica, and her uncle, David Zeidman, were all the heads of various departments and her other uncle, Alex Zeidman, was the overall director of the Mission. In fact her grandmother Annie, who lived in the apartment next to ours, and her late grandfather, Morris, had directed the Mission from 1941 to 1964 and even for 20 years before that when it was still known as the Scott Institute. Except for David all of them have since passed away. In fact I'll never forget our saddest day at the Scott Mission. I got up one Monday morning in October of 1986 to open the building. As I did I wondered why so many people seemed so gloomy. Eventually I learned that Alex, the director whom everyone loved so dearly, had died the day before in a boating accident on Lake Ontario. It was a devastating blow to all of us.

The Zeidman family still provides passionate, Christ-centred leadership at the Mission. Currently Lois continues to serve there as does her sister Sera and her cousin Andrew, Alex's son. Several other family members continue to be involved. Previously I only saw the family's leadership through my five year experience at the Mission. But when we visited in May Lois gave us a copy of a new book about the Mission that had just been released earlier in the month. *More than Miracles* by Ben Volman tells the story of the Mission from as far back as 1912 when

Morris Zeidman first came to Canada as a Polish, Jewish immigrant, and soon came to faith in Jesus Christ. Reading this book opened my mind to so many more remarkable things about this family, this ministry and the way God has worked through them.

One of the most dramatic insights came when I learned about the transition in leadership between Morris and Alex Zeidman in 1964. They were two very different men. Morris had been a determined visionary; a man of great faith who was not afraid to take a stand, even if it was unpopular. Alex, on the other hand, carried a quiet yet kind, compassionate and powerful presence. He became a great team builder. In fact there was a significant increase in the number of staff under his leadership. Shannon always says he had the amazing ability to walk around the building, talk to the various department heads, say a few words of encouragement and then move along. We always had the sense he knew everything that was going on but he didn't micro-manage anyone! I'm sure that when the transition first took place many wondered if it would work. By the time we got there twenty years later it was clear it had worked remarkably well.

As I think about that I remember how God worked through the different personalities and leadership styles of people in the Bible: Moses and Joshua, Deborah and Barak, David and Solomon, Paul and Barnabas, Priscilla and Aquila. Shannon and I have also realized that our personality and leadership styles are probably a lot more like Alex Zeidman, the team builder, than Morris Zeidman, the determined visionary. We may have a bit of a ways to go to aspire to his example but that is the kind of leadership style we hope to develop as we move into the future in the Cariboo House Church Ministry.

---

## **Reflections on House Church Ministry**

*In our last newsletter we began a series on "Why We Do House Church."*

*Here are some recent submissions that follow that theme.*

### **Visitors from Norman Kennedy Presbyterian Church: Ronda Bosch**

On June 30<sup>th</sup> five people piled into a van to drive from Regina, Saskatchewan to the interior region of British Columbia called the Cariboo. The four young adults were a part of a study and fellowship group for the last few years where they discussed the Bible, their lives and their Christian service in the world. They wanted to experience 'mission' in the context of how and where the

Presbyterian Church in Canada defines it and does it. As part of the Norman Kennedy Presbyterian (NKP) congregation they are aware of local inner city mission, through the interdenominational work of Soul's Harbour, and supporters of native mission, specifically the Native Circle mission in Saskatoon. The four young adults are also part of the NKP praise team and also provide leadership in children's ministry, both Vacation Bible School and Sunday School. Together with their pastor, a Lay Missionary,

who has been serving Norman Kennedy Church for nine years, they prayed and planned a trip to become better acquainted with 'house church' and 'on reserve' types of ministry, both of which could become more significant in our prairie context.



We arrived in Williams Lake on July 1<sup>st</sup> and left on July 7<sup>th</sup> to return to Saskatchewan, arriving back on the 8<sup>th</sup>. We thoroughly enjoyed many aspects of our visit and trip. We saw beautiful places, met wonderful people, participated in fun activities, provided leadership as requested, and absorbed information about culture and mission and ministry.

When asked about their insights and learnings, each participant wrote the following thoughts:

*“Compared to a Norman Kennedy Church worship service, the house church service was very simple, and flexible. There was no invitation to stand or written prayer. I feel like the service was totally different from ours. I have never experienced this kind of worship service before, and it was a very unique experience. They have pastors, but the pastors did not do everything, not even the preaching. They take turns with everything, and that was very interesting to see.”* (Samuel Jung)

*“When I think of all the house churches we attended during our mission trip, I ponder on the words of the Bible which stress that the church is not the building but the people. I learned that coming together to worship the Lord doesn't require a certain number of people and that even with just two or three people worshipping the Lord, one can sense the presence of the Lord in their midst. I liked how unrestrained the house churches were. It was comfortable, familiar and welcoming. We exchanged our understanding of the Word and strengthened our faith in the process.”* (Mabel Kotei)

*“I learned that house church is not about the church building but the people that make up the body of Christ. Since Christ calls us to lift up, teach and encourage one another so do the members of the house church; like a family. I believe the native ministry will need more support from us, financially and in our prayers. Jon and Shannon involve themselves in the majority of the events in Nazko and this shows the love of God through them to the people. This made me want to strive to extend showing God's love beyond my church and workplace.”* (Jessica Kotei)

*“In spite of the difference in the terrain, I feel house churches would work as well in Saskatchewan as they do in the Cariboo. Our communities are just as far apart and it is heartbreaking to realize that several of these communities and small towns have had to close down their churches in the last few years. There has been no report available on how our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ have been faring spiritually since then. My thoughts have been on Paul and his numerous letters to each of the places he introduced to Christ and I think of the possibilities and hope the Cariboo Presbyterian Church gives me. As with native ministry, the openness, warmth and homey welcome we found in house churches would be a step in fostering a trusting relationship like Jon and Shannon have with the people of Nazko. Having run a five-day Vacation Bible School on the Mistawasis reserve during the week of August 8th, I was more aware of the hesitation and suspicion the children and their parents had in trying the program. It saddened me that they did not let themselves enjoy the wonderful program the synod had provided until the fourth day. As a result, I believe there is potential in trying house churches in our Native missionary outreach.”* (Rachel Kotei)

*“I was pleased to meet and enjoy Christian community with fellow ‘lay missionaries’ (Ginny & Bruce) and minister/pastor colleagues (Jon & Shannon) during the visit to the Cariboo. I was encouraged in conversation about the church, specifically about the role of lay leadership. I enjoyed looking through the picture albums and hearing some of the stories of the beginnings, growth, changes and challenges of this unique ministry within the Presbyterian Church in Canada. I envision that such ministry (house ministry/small Christian communities) will become more common in the future. In Saskatchewan we have so many small churches struggling to stay open and to be relevant in their communities. I believe a mission plan is needed that recognizes the need for people to have a caring community to share life with, specifically faith life, and to find a common plan of being the hands and feet and heart of Jesus in their neighbourhoods. The visit to the Cariboo has inspired me and renewed my passion to be part of effective God-honouring ministries.” (Ronda Bosch)*

#### **Why We Do House Church: by Bruce Wilcox**

Our mission here in the Cariboo continues to be to take the gospel and love of Christ to rural and remote areas that are beyond the reach of the traditional church. But that certainly does not preclude the value of house churches even within the bounds of the “traditional” church as the Lord leads, because there are many compelling reasons for them biblically, historically, theologically and practically.

First, it’s clear in the very early church when it was still only Jewish, that the main places for Christian worship were people’s homes, as well as the temple (Acts 2:46, 5:42, etc). The use of the temple probably only lasted for a relatively short time before Jewish persecution would have prevented it. James, the author of the epistle, was reportedly murdered in the temple. This would indicate that Christians in Jerusalem were probably already refused access to the temple some years before it’s destruction in 70 AD. But by this time house churches had already been established among the Gentiles in many different places as the gospel spread. Some of those churches are mentioned by Paul in a number of his epistles. The early church was not only expelled from the synagogues by the Jews, they were also persecuted by various Roman governments beginning with Nero, then Domitian. He was almost certainly the reason John was imprisoned on the penal colony of Patmos when he received the vision that became the book of

Revelation. Most scholars think it was written around 95AD.

So the point is this: basically the *only* model of worship left for Christians in these New Testament, apostolic times was the house church! This was the main way the Lord led his people in worshipping him, and in experiencing what “the priesthood of all believers” really means. The result was the growth of Christianity even in the face of additional Roman persecution and suspicion from the surrounding culture until, many years later, the emperor Constantine decided it would be politically expedient to legalize the Christian gospel in 313AD. Eventually Christianity was made the official “state religion” of the Roman Empire by Theodosius in 380AD.

Unfortunately, after that we see things beginning to change in some very unhealthy ways. The “priesthood of all believers” somehow developed into more of a class system of clergy and laity, with power and authority becoming concentrated into the hands of fewer and fewer people, and ultimately even into one person at the top of a great institutionalized, hierarchical pyramid. Unholy alliances and compromises with secular political agendas and corruption became major problems. This was a system which also no doubt resulted in many “lay” Christians thinking they could never really be used by Christ as originators of any real ministry. The underlying message was to just pray, pay, and leave everything else up to the “clergy.”

The Protestant Reformation certainly corrected some important doctrinal things, but it seems clear that the Lord is never done working and has much more reforming in mind for his church in the years ahead. That’s because the church is called to be a witness to the world not just evangelistically, but prophetically. Because many of the truths of Christ, as revealed in his Word, are things the world does not want to hear, Jesus said his people would suffer persecution for his sake, just like the prophets. Yet we are called to be counter-cultural! In fact sooner or later all believers will suffer some kind of persecution (2 Tim 3:12). Virtually every great revival and work of Christ has historically come about through opposition and persecution, and one of the main vehicles the Lord has used is house churches, which are often driven underground! Just in recent history it’s staggering how the Lord has been growing his church in the former Soviet Union, China and many other places in the world to this day.

What about persecution here in the West? Our culture increasingly sees morality in relative and

pluralistic terms and often rejects truth that is universal or absolute. Counter-cultural Christians are already experiencing building pressure and opposition as they proclaim Scriptural definitions of right and wrong and the uniqueness of Christ to save and transform sinners. As this grows I believe more Christians will find themselves increasingly marginalised and perhaps eventually even openly persecuted. In such tumultuous times, I would not be surprised to see the Lord work through the great arc of history to bring more and more of his people full circle and gather them in house churches once again, even here in the West.

There are also other more obvious practical reasons for house churches, as many denominations continue to shrink and find themselves financially unable to maintain their properties and increasingly empty buildings.

In addition to these biblical and historical reasons, I've been thinking about how theologically sacramental house church actually is. We are adopted into the very family of God with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and we are all family. There is something really significant about that in the context of worshipping together in a place where a family

already lives and calls home. The love, the informality, the interaction together in the Word, the food, the sacraments, the fellowship and worship together just seem to connect us together as family in really profound and encouraging ways, both with one another and with the Lord, who is not only in our midst, but actually in us! Family! Even when we worship in a place that no one actually lives in, like the ancient temple, we can still learn from the foundational model of house church to cultivate the same kind of intimacy, worship and fellowship together as family, through the presence of Christ and his love.

The Lord is the head of his body, and as such he knows how to run it! So why house church? Because in his wisdom house churches have been a hugely important historical and biblical means that the Lord has used to manifest his continued incarnational, grassroots and missional witness in this world through his body, as a priesthood of *all* believers!

Once again, a *huge* thank you to all of you who have partnered with us in this important mission through your prayers and gifts of support!

---

## Reports on Some Summer Events

### Celebrating a 20 Year Relationship:

#### Shannon Bell-Wyninga

Moose meat, bannock, salmon, rice, salads, and lusus (Indian ice cream), all laid out on big tables, all prepared by the people of the Ndazkoh community. This is the picture of ministry coming full circle. In 1997, when we still lived in Williams Lake, we came home from a week away to find several messages on our answering machine. One was from St. Giles' Church in Prince George to say that, after a number of years of leading a summer Vacation Bible School in Ndazkoh, they would not be able to put a team together that year to offer the program to the community. A few messages later we heard from a First Nations pastor friend asking if we could use a group of Koreans for 10 days in the summer to come up and do VBS and service projects in the Ndazkoh village. We were amazed at God's timing and provision. As one door closed, another one opened to begin a two decade long relationship with Vancouver Korean Presbyterian Church.

That summer we received our first Love Corps team made up of Korean youth from all over Canada.

One of those youth was from VKPC. The next year she returned and brought more from her church. By the third year, the team had become exclusively a ministry of VKPC within the umbrella of the Love Corps organization. The Ndazkoh community quickly fell in love with 'the Koreans', asking every year, "When are the Koreans coming?" A whole generation of kids on our reserve have grown up coming to VBS and being loved by these youth. Each year the whole community has gathered for Feast Night, or Culture Night as it was originally called. An entire team of cooks from VKPC came up each year and spent a whole day preparing an amazing Korean feast for the community before returning home the next day. The evening also included cultural presentations, sometimes by a separate team all the way from Korea, and in later years, a variety of Korean and Dakelh cultural activities. Every year the people from VKPC raise the funds to pay for all aspects of the ten day ministry, from renting vehicles to food and VBS materials. It has been a time of tremendous activity each summer in the community and we all look with anticipation each year to the

arrival of 'the Koreans'. The kids and youth here feel loved and the whole community has a great time.

The relationship between Ndazkoh and VKPC has not been limited to the summer. Letters used to go back and forth and once phones and internet came to the community, email and then Facebook has kept some of us connected for many years. When community members are faced with hospitalization in Vancouver, our Korean friends are there to offer pastoral care, prayer and tangible help. When we took a group to Vancouver for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, VKPC folks attended with us and helped to host us.

When we realized that this year we would be receiving a team for the 20<sup>th</sup> year, it was time to give back. The community pulled together in love and generosity to host the VKPC team for Feast Night. Many of the women made enough food to feed the approximately 120 people who came. Others pitched in with set-up and clean up afterwards. Another picked berries and canned them in time to put into the gift bags we gave as tokens of our love and appreciation. A band councilor collected gifts of hand-made jewelry as well as a book about the elders' stories to give to each representative who came from Vancouver. Others donated prizes and baked cakes for Indian Bingo and cake walks. Local musicians set up their band to play long into the evening after the games and a slide show of photos compiled from the last 20 years. It felt good for the community to give back.



This is what mission is meant to be – a giving and receiving of love and care based on relationship that reflects the love that Jesus has for each of us. It may start with one group providing for another in order to introduce people to Jesus, but we should never allow the giving and receiving to become entrenched in one direction. One of the marks of effective mission is when 'the receivers' become 'the

givers'. The privilege of sharing the gospel of Christ happens when the relationships are mutual and not dependent. It is mission coming full circle.

### **Cariboo Christian Outreach: John Noble**

This summer has been active with organizing rodeo events, Vacation Bible Schools, and prayer meetings. We had opportunities to see the Holy Spirit changing lives.

Our first event of the season was in May at the 100 Mile House Little Britches Rodeo. Our eight year old son, Josh prayed with about five boys to receive Christ. This was the first rodeo outreach following John's heart by-pass so it was exciting to be going again. We felt a little challenged by the physical demands of putting up the tent, serving in it and traveling to and from the rodeo, but God strengthened us and it went well! The cold, rainy weather meant the overall outreach was excellent because people came to the tent for hot drinks and cookies. House church pastor, Bruce Wilcox, along with country singer Maggie Wiens sang on the float. They also sang for the Cowboy Church and Bruce preached. We were the only live band in the 100 Mile House parade and so were placed up front right behind the mayor and dignitaries. We handed out several hundred tracts and gave the people a taste of Cowboy Church music.

Our son, Stephen, joined the ministry for the summer. He recruited a young man from Washington State, Daniel Newman, as his protégé. A surprise helper was our past intern from last summer, Shannon Dunphy. She assisted in the magazine distribution and many office activities as well as in the Vacation Bible Schools.

June consisted of a Young Men's Horse Ride where nine attended. We were safe, yet not dry! Despite the rain, we had a great time. To the boys' enjoyment there was a lot of food and great story telling, especially by Paul Noble and Daniel Newman. Then on Father's Day weekend, we held a Cowboy Church at the Tatla Lake Gymkhana. It was an enjoyable time with Stephen and Paul leading the singing, Mike and Joy Holdt sang some special music, and John preaching to about 42 attendees.

At the end of June, we geared up for the Williams Lake Stampede. As in previous years, we had our Cowboy Chapel set up on the grounds. One Christian lady with great compassion for the lost was driving through Williams Lake and ended up stopping by the tent. We had not met her before, yet, she ended up volunteering her time to serve the tent.

Also, she and a native Christian bought and cooked hotdogs for people coming into the tent! Quite a few of our guests were drunk but, with our staff and these volunteers, we were able to help and minister to many people. During the parade, we had teenagers help pass out 1,800 magazines, 2,000 bracelets, and several hundred tracts. We had country gospel Singer Abe Zacharias sing on the float. Then, early on the Sunday morning, we had Cowboy Church where several local churches joined in. This was an opportunity to reach people attending the stampede, plus minister to the local church people that came. We had approximate 600 people present. We gave out about 350 muffins and 200 cups of coffee and hot chocolate. Cowboy poet and preacher, Bryn Thiessen, preached a good solid gospel message while Stephen Noble's band led the pre-service singing and Abe Zachariah shared a set of special music.

In July, we held two Vacation Bible Schools. One was in Tatla Lake and the other on the Alkali Lake Reserve. Both VBSs had their own struggles and miracles while being witness to God's power and mercy. At Tatla Lake, one little girl came in like a whirlwind and had all the staff wondering how to handle her. When told that God made us with two ears and one mouth so that we could listen she said, "I wish I had one ear and two mouths." She asked many questions. By the end of the week, three girls prayed to receive Christ with Cynthia and hopefully our little questioner learned something.

At the Alkali Lake Reserve (Esket) we had 15 children attend the first day. Then on Tuesday, we found out that someone in the community had quickly planned a camp-out for the kids. We were discouraged and prayed. We ended up having four kids attend! Each day we had different kids or adults. By Thursday, both children that were there that day gave their hearts to Christ.

Our most recent event was the Chilcotin Gospel Music Jamboree on August 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> with Crystal and Herb Taylor, Abe Zacharias, Stephen, Paul, and yes even John plus many others. It was a great weekend of music, fellowship, and amazing food!! Herb gave short but good evangelistic messages. There were two people who gave their lives to Christ and two baptisms on Sunday.

We have a trip to Red Deer at the end of August where John will be sharing at Herb and Crystal Taylor's annual ministry dinner. In October, we hope to report to our ministry partners.

Thank you and God bless you in the seasons ahead.  
(*Cariboo Christian Outreach is a ministry of the Noble family from our McLeese Lake House Church.*)

### **House Church Family Loses Home in a Fire**

On July 30 we received the distressing news that a family from our Sheridan Lake House Church lost almost everything they owned in a house fire earlier that day. Berney and Alice Duits had been out with six of their 11 children to celebrate the 18<sup>th</sup>



birthday of one of their daughters when an older son discovered the fire. By the time it was out they had lost their house, their workshop, a truck Berney used for his work as a builder and all of his tools. Their two dogs also died in the fire but thankfully no human lives were lost. Their property is outside of the fire protection area and was uninsured. Since the fire there has been a groundswell of support for the Duits family. A close family friend has started a "Go Fund Me" campaign on the internet, several individuals and community organizations have offered support, there has been a fundraising dinner and silent auction and the Cariboo Presbyterian Church is receiving contributions for the Duits family. Even two days after the fire Alice reported, "We have been surrounded by the love, prayers and support by so many we know and also many we do not know. Yes, we are devastated and the loss is huge *but* we know we serve a God who cares for our every need." Readers can learn more about the fire on the internet at <http://globalnews.ca/news/2866417/cariboo-family-of-13-devastated-after-home-burns-down/>. Anyone who would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to support the Duits can make a cheque payable to "The Cariboo Presbyterian Church" with a note marked "For the Duits family." Thanks for your prayers and support for them.



---

## Reports from Our Graduates and Other Young People

*(Recently several young adults from our house churches have graduated from various programs of study or achieved other special accomplishments. Here are some of their stories.*

*If there are any we have missed please let us know so we can include them in future newsletters.)*

### Mark Noble previously from McLeese Lake

This spring I graduated from Trinity Western University with a BA in psychology. The previous four years have been great for both personal and family growth. These years in school have been among the best for both marriage and family. This fall I am beginning an MA in counselling psychology, at Trinity as well. I am unsure if I will use this schooling as a stepping stone for such aspects as assessment for social services or in the traditional use, such as counselling. We continue to walk forward through the doors God opens, both in business and in schooling.

### Mary Yurchenko (Noble) previously from McLeese Lake

I graduated with a BA in Pastoral Ministry in 2014 from Prairie College. As I took the program I really wasn't sure exactly how God would use it in my life, but had a strong sense that it was the right program for me. Since I graduated, I have worked as a peer counsellor at a crisis pregnancy centre in Fort St. John. I have been able to use my studies more than I ever knew I would! For the past two years I have also been the children's director at Evangel Chapel. Last year, Vadim and I were married and we continue to follow God's leading day by day, hoping to continue the ministry God has called us to. We plan to work more with our local church, establishing a school of ministry program, where Vadim is teaching and I am working with more of the counseling aspect.



### Stephen Noble from McLeese Lake

It was November of 2013 when I opened an email from my sister, Mary, enthusiastically telling me in capital letters, that there was a brand new music program opening up in the next school year at Prairie College (formerly known as Prairie Bible Institute). "BRIAN DOERKSEN IS LEADING IT," she informed me. And, "YOU GOTTA COME!" I was 25% convinced about the program she related to me, though it wasn't for her lack of trying! It just didn't seem like it was for me. Within a month's time, Jesus changed my plans that I hadn't made yet!

On August 28th, 2014, I was in a foreign feeling classroom with nine other students, pinching myself to reality, trying to grasp how surreal it was to actually be in the same room with "the Dirks," as we fondly called him behind his back. For some three weeks I can remember thinking, "I am in a songwriting program for the next two years, under one of the church's best loved songwriters, *and he knows my name!*"

One of the greatest joys of my time while studying at Prairie was on April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016. Twelve students were originally accepted into the first class of the Music and Worship Arts program, ten showed up, we gained one transfer, and one had to drop after two semesters. Adrenaline was pulsing through the air all day as the ten of us who had "survived" the frequent havoc of the program, prepared and waited for the release concert to finally come round. We were given no clue to the fact that Brian had intended, from the first conception of the program, that we were to each record a professionally



done EP (half album) of original songs as our last and final project of the program! A six song EP! And it was the evening of the 21<sup>st</sup> that we were to release our work for the last two years to our parents, Prairie staff, friends, students and townspeople! The picture shown is of me, with Brian Doerksen, holding up a framed copy of my album, "The Hope of Glory." It was taken after the concert for a crowd of about 300 people.

You know that feeling of satisfaction you get when you know you did what the Lord asked you to do; a feeling of accomplishment, of having done your best, of having been where the Lord led? When I left Prairie, I had received a Diploma in Music and Worship Arts. I really didn't know what I was getting into by applying for Bible school, but I can say without a doubt that God led and I did my best to follow. It was a time of intense learning without any regrets. Where God will lead now, I don't know. The one I follow is, and has proven himself faithful and true, and I will continue to do my best to follow his lead.

For several years I have asked the Lord to allow me, at some time in my life, to be a voice for those who have no voice; specifically, unborn children. Last fall I heard a doctor's presentation on Euthanasia, an issue that was a hot topic at the time of the election. I was impressed to speak up for those who are oppressed and dealing with life and death in the midst of "in-the-moment" decisions. As of January, 2017, it is my plan to begin research and study on the topic of abortion, for the purpose of writing songs addressing the issue. I so want to get the heart of God behind these songs. My plan is to research, write, rewrite, get multiple sources of feedback, refine, finish and then record these songs professionally. I spoke with a Christian producer from Mission, BC who is willing to get behind such a project. Of course, this is all if the Lord is willing, but if the Spirit leads and continues to open the doors, I want to obey and walk the path he creates in front of me.

*If any of our readers are interested in a copy of Stephen's EP please contact us at our surface mail or email address.*

### **Shelby Dumoulin (Wyminga) previously from Nazko**

This April, I graduated from Trinity Western University's School of the Arts Media and Culture with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting.

Unlike many other acting programs in the area, TWU offers an actual degree in acting. As a part of the liberal arts program I was able to take a wide variety of courses outside my discipline, in addition to the training I



received in acting, directing, playwriting, literature and voice, etc. My program helped me to not only develop my performance abilities, but gave me a broad base of knowledge and experience and helped me to develop as an individual. I immensely enjoyed my five years in the program, and while I will miss my awesome school family, I look forward to putting my degree to use in Vancouver's theatre community. My husband Tyler and I have just moved from Langley to Richmond to be closer to the Vancouver theatre scene and I hope to pursue opportunities in both theatre and film, onstage and backstage. Currently I am in rehearsals for *The Beaux' Stragagem*, an English Restoration comedy being produced by a well-respected semiprofessional theatre company. In the near future I want to mount my own production of *Hamlet*, as Shakespeare is where most of my love of theatre is centred. Things are sure to be a whirlwind for the next several months, but Tyler and I are excited to see where life takes us.

---

## Stories, Reflections and Poems

### The Boy Who Became King: by Alamaz Durand

One of my favourite stories is the one about the sword in the stone. There are many things I love about it but the foremost is the element of surprise. This sword was the key to royalty, the one who could pull it from its place in the stone would reign over a great kingdom.

Many a strong man came. Crowds formed to watch as, one by one, the men yanked, pulled, pushed, cursed but in the end the sword would not budge one bit. One day, a young, scrawny, meek, humble servant came and watched these men try to take this stinking sword from its spot in the stone. The servant weaved his way through the crowd and finally came over to the stone. The onlookers made jokes. Some were angry. Others physically threatened the kid. Ignoring them he reached out, wrapped his hand around the hilt of the sword, and simply pulled the sword out as easy as one would slice butter. At first no one knew how to react. This boy, this servant did what the strongest of men could not.

In time he fought armies that threatened his land over and over again. With armour and sword he defeated the strongest of foes. This boy became one of the most loved kings of all time: King Arthur of Camelot.

The next hero that I will be sharing with you is a boy who became king. This story starts in 1 Samuel 16 in the Bible. The current king of Israel, King Saul, was nearing the last of his years reigning over Israel. For many a reason God decided to change things up, so to speak. Samuel, the prophet, was commanded by God to go to Bethlehem to seek a man named Jesse. Jesse had seven sons. Each son passed by Samuel. There was one son that Samuel was sure would be the one God would choose. His name was Eliab. Yet it says in I Samuel 16:7, "But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord doesn't see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.'"

So Samuel looked at Jesse and asked him if all the young men were there? Jesse said no, his youngest was tending the sheep in the field. Samuel told Jesse to send for his youngest son. The Bible describes the boy as ruddy, bright eyed and good

looking. Then God said, "Yes this is the one!" Who was this boy? His name was David. Samuel anointed David with oil and then he went to the land of Ramah. Soon David became King Saul's servant. As the king's armour bearer he played the harp whenever Saul was distressed.

Skipping ahead a little, there came a time when Saul was in quite the predicament. A people called the Philistines gathered their army to go to battle. They had quite the army which had wreaked havoc all over the land until it finally was on a mountain with Israel facing them from another mountain. The Philistines secret weapon was a champion named Goliath who came from Gath. His height was six cubits and a span. (That's over nine feet tall!) He had a bronze helmet. He was armed with a coat of mail which weighed five thousand shekels of bronze. (That's about 125 pounds!) He had bronze armour on his legs, a bronze javelin and a spear. This guy was massive. And he challenged anyone from the army of Israel to face him. As you could imagine the soldiers were probably trying to find every excuse not to go out into that valley. Saul was desperate. Who would face Goliath? One of his men had to do it!

David, the servant to the king, came forward and he said he would do it. All the men made strange looks at David as Saul sent for him. Saul simply said something like, "You are nothing but a youth and your good looks won't even put a scratch on him. You're crazy!" But the thing is David had faith that God had delivered him from being attacked by a bear and a lion when he was out tending the sheep. So he had no doubt that God would protect him when he fought with Goliath. Saul put his faith in David and prepared him for battle. He placed a bronze helmet on his head, chainmail on his body and gave him a sword. He was ready. He was going to take on this beast of a man. But now he could not even move. The armour was weighing him down. So David removed the armour, took up a staff and five smooth stones from a brook and put them in his shepherd's bag. Along with them he put a sling. So David and the Philistine went out against each another.

Goliath was not amused. David was just a youth, ruddy and good looking. He wasn't the strongest of the army. Where was the muscle? Goliath jested and laughed that this youth was

fighting with a stick for a weapon. He would kill David in a heartbeat! David simply pointed out that Goliath was fighting him with a sword, a spear and a javelin, but God would protect David and he would be the one to destroy this giant.

Goliath approached David and that is when David ran out to meet him. David took a stone in the sling and, bam, hit him right in the forehead! The stone hit so hard it sank into Goliath's head and he fell to the ground. David took Goliath's sword and, well, as the queen of hearts proclaimed in Alice, "Off with their heads!" Seeing this boy defeat their champion, the Philistine army turned tail and ran. Snapping out of their shock the army of Israel took up their weapons and roared after the Philistines!



Over time David surpassed Saul. There was big family drama, some scandal and, to make a long story short, Saul died. If you want the full details read First and Second Samuel in the Bible. When David was thirty years of age he became King of Israel.

I love this story because just like the sword in the stone, it holds an element of surprise: a simple boy does what strong men cannot do. Not only did he defeat Goliath but sent an entire army fleeing for their lives. It is said that King Arthur was a good, strong and kind King, just as David was. The Bible says that David was a man after God's own heart. So when you face any kind of obstacle and you think that you cannot handle it, think of David, this underestimated hero; a boy shepherd who conquered the giant. I urge you to have faith: faith in God for everything that you do because, who knows, you might find yourself being that unexpected surprise.

#### **A Little Matter of Trust: by Lori Meyer**

When I was a child, I learned that I could not trust anyone. My world was an unsteady place, full of potholes and quicksand. I would have to figure things out for myself, and rely on my own pitifully small resources. Unlearning this philosophy is like learning not to breathe.

"Do you trust me?" God asks.

"Of course I do. You are big and I am small. The Bible tells me so."

"No, I mean do you trust me with this troubled world . . . with your sick friends . . . with your life and your death . . . with your children . . . with painful relationships . . . with your own ragged history . . . for the faith that is lacking . . . for the love so crucial to your walk . . . with your wounds and your hopes? Do you trust me for every penny you need, every problem that looms, every prayer that you send, however weak . . . with all you have done, right and wrong, and all you want to do - and especially for all that you cannot manage to do? Do you trust me for every second of every minute, for every thought in your head, every move your body makes, and for every beat of your anxious heart?"

I am discovering that trust is not only vast and wide and can be too easily acknowledged, but it is also tiny - as quick as a split second! Trust can have the smallest circumference, as that of a hair from your head, barely a dot to us, but known and counted and kept track of by the God who asks, "Do you trust me?"

#### **Confidence** **by Audrey Smith**

I'll not worry 'bout tomorrow  
'Till the sun comes up again  
Or let its many problems  
Torment my little brain.

Today is now, to live and love.  
Tomorrow's cares can wait.  
To worry is a feeling  
I don't appreciate.

I'll wait for God's surprises.  
The future is unknown  
And tho' the road has bends and & twists  
I'll never walk alone.

His promises are many.  
His word is always true.  
"I love you child," he says to me.  
"I gave my life for you."

My Father wants the best for me  
And works it out that way  
Though the pattern may seem jumbled  
And his reason gone astray.

By holding his great hand of love  
in simple faith I find  
these troubles that I thought so bad  
Were blessings all the time!