

Preparation for the Healing of the Land in Iqaluit, Nunavut's Capital



Note the location of **Iqaluit, Nunavut**, the location of Canada's northernmost capital city.



Could the **Northern Lights** over Iqaluit be a symbol of the light piercing the darkness that can offer hope to the other capital cities, provinces and territories of Canada as well?



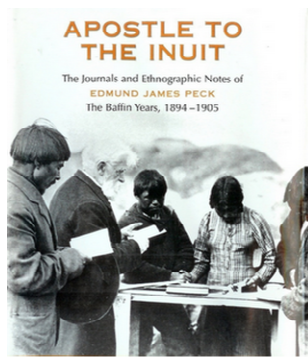
The last time that I was in Iqaluit prior to my most recent visit was from August 5-7, 2009, during which time I was invited to have a 10-minute interview with a morning announcer from the radio station **CBC North** in Iqaluit which is heard in every community of Nunavut and Nunavik (northern Quebec).

In the course of the interview, the announcer asked me all of the tough questions as to what I was doing up there in the North, and what this “healing of the land” process was and is all about. As one can imagine, in view of past mistakes that the church has made with residential schools, and assimilating indigenous peoples into the white man’s culture, the guardedness is well understood and well taken.

One of the questions I was asked was, “What do you have to say about the role of the first **Roman Catholic** and **Anglican** missionaries in showing so little regard for the traditional Inuit religion and for the Inuit culture?”

Before I share my response, let me emphasize that I have a high regard for the role of the earliest missionaries. They suffered and endured tremendously as they lived among the people in difficult, harsh conditions to bring the gospel to the Inuit.

I have done a review on the *Journals of Edmond James Peck*, the first Anglican Missionary in the Baffin region between 1894 and 1905 on my blog, entitled, *Apostle to the Inuit*. He made huge sacrifices, far beyond anything that I have even begun to know or experience.



The review that I have made on Peck's *Journals* is on the May 5, 2008 entry of my blog at: http://canadaawakeningministries.blogspot.com/2008_05_01_archive.html



However, as the gospel spread from the *Cumberland Sound* region of Baffin Island up to *Pond Inlet*, and the Roman Catholics and the Anglicans started demonizing one another, saying only their denomination was going to heaven, it left a legacy of much division. In Pond Inlet, there are even separate cemeteries for the Roman Catholics and the Anglicans, because they did not believe that they were going to the same place. Thankfully, that attitude is changing.

So in my answer to the **CBC North** interviewer, I stated that “whether it is with the church which brought in a denominationalized Christianity, or with traditional Inuit religion, there are things in all cultures that are good, and some things that are not good. There are things that are *precious*, and things that are *worthless* in both traditional Inuit culture, and in the traditional church.”

I added that “in the healing the land process, we seek to separate the *precious* (generational blessings) from the *worthless* (generational curses) in all cultures and faiths, including the white man's culture, and that we seek to break generational curses and to strengthen generational blessings so that the present generation of young people can be free from the curses that have brought fear and darkness into the culture, and walk in greater light and freedom in the future.”

The radio announcer certainly clarified that she had not meant to put the **Roman Catholic** and **Anglican** missionaries into a negative light, because she knew that they had done a lot of good, and in most cases had a lot of compassion for the Inuit.

So now, fast forward that **CBC North** interview in Iqaluit on Friday, August 7, 2009, to November 26, 2009, when I returned to Iqaluit to follow up on the rising interest among some of the elders and community leaders to eventually do a healing the land process there.



We met that night in the home of Ron and Veronica Dewar (on the right), along with (left to right) Lucy Netser (the **Anglican minister** in Iqaluit), Sammi (a highly respected Inuit elder), Father Daniel Perreault (the **Roman Catholic** minister for both Iqaluit and Pond Inlet), Scott Manly (Seventh Day Adventist), and yours truly.

It suddenly hit me that here we were, sitting down with the actual leaders of the two most traditional churches in the Canadian Arctic—**Anglican** and **Roman Catholic**. These are the denominations that used to have nothing to do with each

other, and who used to demonize one another, and here is **present-day Anglican minister** (Lucy Netser) talking to the **present-day Roman Catholic priest** (Father Daniel Perrault) from Iqaluit and Pond Inlet.

In more recent years, the division has not been as overt or in the open, but yet the legacy of failing to communicate with one another, and to build relationships beyond their denominational walls, are still there. Huge invisible walls were simply allowed to remain uncontested for generations, and now we are wondering why the youth are so vulnerable to the spirit of death and of suicide, which of course affects the whole community—Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Pentecostal, as well as those of no faith.

So Father Daniel Perreault broke the ice that evening by saying that his Roman Catholic congregation was pretty much a multi-cultural group, made up of only a very, very few Inuit, but mostly French, and other ethnicities. He said that while we don't often talk about it, that the people in his congregation feel alienated, isolated, and not really properly welcomed by the original peoples, the Inuit community. Yet he longed to see that happen.

Sammi, the Inuit elder there who attends the Anglican Church, said that he also had a longing, and that his longing was to properly welcome the other people groups that had moved into this area, and to release forgiveness for any wrongs of the past. Both the Inuit and the other people groups had similar longings, but they just had not been talking together in recent years to actually know what was in each other's hearts.

So it was agreed upon that this communication process and interaction should start taking place with a view to walking a journey together for the healing of the land that God had given to the Inuit ancestors as a homeland many years ago. Father Perreault proposed, and everybody agreed, that the Anglican minister, Lucy Netser, would write a letter, and that the presiding minister of each congregation would sign it, indicating their encouragement to the people within their congregations and spheres of influence to come together to begin a journey towards a healing the land process in Iqaluit during the summer of 2010.

So they plan to spread this letter, and to begin announcing this process in their churches, and begin meeting together with all who have a heart to pray for unity, and for the breaking of dividing walls, starting in mid-January of 2010. Inuit elders will start encouraging congregations made up of primarily other ethnicities to join them in this healing journey.

According to Sammi, the highly respected Inuit elder, he believes that the *City Council of Iqaluit* will recognize one or two of their councilors to be the point of contact for the healing the land process in their city, and he knows of other elders who will join with the church leaders to begin to pray together, and to do the spiritual mapping that will enable them to be clear on the most rooted generational issues that need to be addressed when a healing the land process comes next summer.

There is now a sense of purpose, of direction, and of enthusiasm with these community leaders from different parts of the city. Ron and Veronica Dewar have been instrumental in doing a lot to build bridges into these different spheres of the community, and Veronica, a past present of the *Inuit Women's Association*, has already helped us with the healing the land process in two Inuit communities. She has also received training in the process, so together with her husband Ron, is well positioned to see this process go forward in Iqaluit.



Just before meeting with these leaders and gatekeepers from Iqaluit in the home of Ron and Veronica Dewar on the evening of Thursday, November 26, I was privileged to have supper in the home of Tagak and Sally Curley, the *Minister of Health and Social Services* for the Nunavut government.



Earlier that day, Tagak had introduced me to Nunavut Premier Eva Aariak, and later to all nineteen members of the *Nunavut Legislative Assembly* during their sitting on November 26. God is really blessing Tagak in his portfolio as the *Minister of Health and Social Services*. The blessing and peace of God is evident in that Department, where Tagak's secretary is Lucy Netser (the Anglican minister) and his Executive Assistant is Looee Arreak, the spouse of James Arreak, pastor of the *Iqaluit Christian Fellowship*.

Tagak will definitely be working with us to help provide a strong spiritual covering for the healing the land process as it comes to Iqaluit, the capital of Nunavut during the summer of 2010, as God continues to prepare the way.



It is looking now like it will probably be in the month of August that *Canada Awakening Ministries* will bring a healing the land team into both Cape Dorset and Iqaluit, Nunavut, spending a week in each community to do back-to-back healing the land processes. These communities are now well positioned to *pray*, to *prepare* and to *plan* for much more reconciliation and healing during the year 2010 and beyond.

I have recently had an interview with Martin Patriquin, a reporter with *Maclean's* magazine. He had heard about the revival of Christianity in Canada's North, and wanted to ask me some questions about my involvement as one of the "missionaries" connected to this movement.

I suspect that initially, in the back of his mind, he was thinking: "How do you know that you, as an evangelical Christian, are not making the same historical mistakes as the traditional **Anglican** and **Roman Catholic** missionaries made in not properly valuing Inuit beliefs, practices and culture?"

Since the process that we are involved with combines **healing the land** (breaking generational curses) with **redeeming the culture** (strengthening generational blessings and what is precious in the culture), and since both the two most traditional churches—Anglican and Roman Catholic—are now working together to address these past mistakes, and to be properly welcomed by the Inuit elders, I think that he found find my answers a bit of a surprise, and hopefully informative.

For the secular humanist who thought of the church's role with the original peoples of Canada as part of the problem, and not any part of the solution, just may be, the true Christian faith is something quite different from the image that we have had of it from the past.

Perhaps the gospel message has not been tried and proven false, but that it has not been fully and adequately proven, and therefore left untried. Clearly, what the nations need is not another **religion** but rather **a real relationship** with the one God who had created us all, and who has revealed Himself in His Son!

The Son of God does not come to the nations and cultures of the earth to take sides! He comes to take over the lives of those who will welcome Him, and allow His Holy Spirit to do a reconciling and healing work that will bless whole communities, regions and nations!

Since the above report was written, this e-mail has just come in from Veronica Dewar who is mentioned in the report, and gives her agreement to the accuracy of what was written about the preparation for the healing of the land in Iqaluit.

“Thanks Roger, This report looks good to me. Thanks so much. Bless you as you help and mentor us. We are privileged to have you as our spiritual father. Thank you.

“It was a good meeting, and good starting point. I am excited for the new year to begin the process for the healing the land in Iqaluit. Many will be changed and transformed as we stand together with the other churches. It is so exciting here to see all the churches together. We have never seen that before. God is so good to us. God bless you Roger. You have a reward in heaven. Be strong in Jesus.

“Veronica Dewar
Iqaluit”