

Revival On Ice

Missionary Kayy Gordon has braved subzero weather and harsh conditions for 40 years to bring the gospel to the Inuit people of Canada's northern Arctic region. Charisma takes you above the tree line to witness this unusual revival.

In the Canadian Arctic, subzero temperatures and wind-whipped blizzards accompanied by blinding, icy fog can leave human travelers directionless, stranded and vulnerable—in much the same way that sin can prevent people from ever finding God. Fortunately for the Eskimos of the Arctic, God raised up a missionary who has shared the compass and light of the gospel in this stark, frozen land for 40 years. Kayy Gordon has left the Arctic ablaze, bringing the Holy Spirit's revival fire to the icy land, penetrating a 5,000-year-old indigenous culture with the good news of Jesus Christ.

Above the tree line, they call this expanse "the barrens." The ground becomes frozen solid and snow-covered over the long winter months. During the short weeks of an Arctic summer the ground turns to a mushy tundra that supports swarms of mosquitoes, and for three months the sun never sets. Arctic dwellers then endure 24 hours of daylight.

Despite such extremes, on a frigid January night in 1958—as temperatures dropped to 50 below zero—24-year-old missionary Kayy Gordon from Vancouver, British Columbia, was determined to take her borrowed dog team 50 miles from her base at Tuk on a one-day journey to a roaming camp of reindeer herders. She took nurse Iona Blakney with her to do immunizations of the herdsmen's families.

Tuk, short for Tuktoyaktuk, is an Eskimo community located high up on the northwestern shores of the Arctic Ocean east of the MacKenzie River Delta on the Beaufort Sea. Out on the barrens Kayy hoped to spend a few days ministering to the herdsman, many of whom already had become faithful believers. Also, Kayy was watchful for an opportunity to share the gospel with Blakney, who was known in Tuk as a woman who liked parties and could drink most men under the table.

Accompanying the women were two men: Nels Pulk, their guide, and his helper Komeak, an Inuit, or Eskimo—the more common term used by Westerners for the Canadian Arctic's native people. Inuit are related to most Arctic dwellers who inhabit the Earth's frozen rooftop. Their relatives can be found in portions of Greenland and Iceland and among Asiatic tribes in Russia.

At about 9 a.m. on the cold, overcast day, the missions team pulled out of Tuk into a terrific icy wind—the kind that cuts like a knife and slows to a crawl even the healthiest of Husky dog teams. Eight hours later the group set up temporary camp at Sownuktuk, or “place of bones.” Nels and Komeak raised a tent and fired up a portable stove for heat.

After some hot tea and a meal, the team packed up and moved on again. As darkness fell, the moon lit up the Arctic landscape. Kayy pondered the God-given beauty of the Arctic, now lit by an almost heavenly light.

“There is something about the perfection, the vastness of this white by any strife or problems of this world, that to me is akin to heaven,” Kayy writes in her book, *God's Fire on Ice*.

Taking Jesus to a Frozen World

After a few days of ministry among the reindeer herders, Kayy's missions team packed up to head back to Tuk. The day they left, the sun set at noon after about only two hours of morning daylight. The temperature dropped to 58 degrees below zero, and soon Kayy noticed her feet were getting very cold. They had gotten damp—a serious danger in subzero temperatures. Dampness can lead to frost bite—or amputation.

Kayy tried changing her socks, but her feet were nearly frozen, and they did not respond to the dry-sock treatment. She knew she must run to get her blood flowing again. She ran in painful strides as the toboggans traveled.

But the running wasn't working, either. Her frozen feet felt like wooden stumps. She feared the worst and prayed for healing. Thirty minutes later she felt sensations in her feet. Miraculously, the blood began to flow, and her feet were spared.

Taking a different route home, the team found an abandoned cabin in which to weather the night. Soon they had a fire blazing. Before turning out her gas lamp, Kayy read her Bible and prayed. She noticed eyes zeroing in on her—those of nurse Iona Blakney.

On the way home, the temperature dropped to 60 below zero, and wind-chill factors lowered it to about 100 below zero. A misty, icy fog settled over the team as they crossed a frozen

lake in search of an igloo for shelter.

"We couldn't find it," Kayy said. "We drove round and round, crisscrossing the lake several times until finally Nels stumbled onto the igloo, which had become iced up on the inside and was consequently very, very cold."

The team settled in to wait for the moon to rise, since the darkness and deep fog made further travel impossible. As soon as the moon was up, Kayy called on the team to leave.

Traveling again, it wasn't long before the wind had swept away all traces of the lead team's tracks, and Kayy's team was in danger of being utterly lost. Kayy prayed silently: "God, somehow make a way for us. I've brought this unsaved nurse with me, and I don't want to be an instrument of her death."

Suddenly, the blowing snow stopped briefly, and Kayy was able to spot Nels' team moving faintly in the distance.

Back in Tuk, Kayy was frustrated that she had not talked with nurse Blakney about Jesus during the trip. But God had different plans. After four days, Blakney came to Kayy's hut, a 14-by-20 plywood house she had built, and nervously asked her questions about her faith. She came back three nights later, and Kayy led her to the Lord.

At Kayy's next service, Blakney—the only white woman in the church besides Kayy—kneeled at the oil heater that served as a makeshift altar and gave her heart to Jesus.

"To the Eskimo people, it was a miracle," Kayy said.

"The white nurse has been saved!" they proclaimed hut to hut.
"Even the whites are getting saved!"

Some eight years later on Dec. 6, 1966, nurse Blakney died of cancer at age 40.

Called to the Wilderness

Now 67, Kayy can recite many

such stories of miraculous survival during her pioneering days, when dog teams or skidoos (snowmobiles) were the only mode of travel. She can tell of thousands of salvations among the Inuit people

during her 40 years of crisscrossing the northern Canadian Arctic.

There was Silas, an alcohol-abusing Inuit man who liked to gamble and was headed for an early death until he heard the gospel. When he accepted Jesus, he went home and threw out his home-brewed alcohol and posted a "No Gambling" sign on his house.

He couldn't read English but wanted to read the Bible, so he prayed for the Lord to enable him to read His Word. God answered with a miracle, and Silas could read the Bible in English, but he could not read any other work printed in English.

Although Kayy's mission has achieved much in 40 years, her work is not complete. She received two very clear words of prophecy not to lay down her Arctic work. In one, the Lord spoke to her and said that "a slower transition is a more solid one," she said.

Kayy allowed Charisma to fly with her team for a week last March during an Arctic ministry tour with evangelist Rodney Howard-Browne. At each stop, Kayy beamed as community centers filled to capacity with Inuit families and town officials hungering for revival services.

The evangelism team took the gospel to Arviat along the western shore of Hudson Bay. In the very first service, the power of God flooded the room. A woman who was blind in one eye gained her sight, and a deaf woman could hear again. The altar looked like a Holy Ghost hospital, with several Inuit strewn about the floor, many sobbing and weeping, others laughing hysterically under God's anointing.

The troupe flew east to Coral Harbor on Southampton Island on the Hudson. At Arviat and Coral Harbor, Kayy's ministry team was honored by town mayors who are Christians, largely as a result of her ministry's outreach.

After an evening service at Coral Harbor, the team flew west at night to Baker Lake to beat poor weather forecasted for the next day. As team members marveled at the incredible lights of the aurora borealis, the airplane's autopilot disengaged, and Howard-Browne had to fly while the pilot corrected the problem. The matter didn't phase Kayy, who bragged about the quality of the airplanes used for her travels today compared with those used 20 years ago.

Kayy first heard the call to minister in the Arctic at age 19 while attending Glad Tidings Fellowship in Vancouver. She was praying on a Saturday night and received a vision of herself ministering to the Inuit, going from place to place in the land of ice and snow. Kayy was ecstatic and told pastor Reg Layzell that God wanted to send her to the Arctic.

"Well Kayy, God knows your address and phone number. When He wants you, He will call you," Layzell said. Kayy was devastated and left the church in tears.

For the next three years friends and relatives ridiculed and rejected her for her "Arctic calling." She prayed that God would remove her passion for the Arctic peoples, but it only grew stronger. Finally, Layzell realized Kayy's passion would not be silenced, and he agreed to send her to the Arctic if she could find a contact there.

Again God provided. On the same morning that Layzell planned to tell Kayy she could not go north without prior contacts, Anna and Mikkel Pulk decided to pay a visit to Layzell's church. The Pulks had lived in the Arctic for 30 years, herding reindeer from Alaska to Canada. The couple had given their lives to Jesus at Reindeer Station in the 1950s and were vacationing in Vancouver.

Moments before the Pulks came in the building, the Lord impressed on Layzell that strangers from the north were arriving at the church. He went to the foyer.

"You people are from the Arctic, aren't you?" he asked, greeting the Pulks.

How could he know that? they wondered. They both were white people and wore no fur parkas or mukluks (fur-covered boots).

Layzell introduced the Pulks to Kayy. At age 22, she left for the Arctic, and the rest is missions history.

Wings Above the Arctic

Kayy left Vancouver to begin her Arctic ministry in June 1956, and through the rest of that decade and the 1960s her work was concentrated in the western regions of the Canadian Arctic. She lived among the Inuit, learning their culture and eating their whale meat, reindeer, caribou and fish, while enduring the harsh weather.

By the 1970s Glad Tidings Arctic Mission was a registered arm of Glad Tidings in Vancouver. And in the 1980s, Kayy had set up Glad Tidings Arctic Missions Society to more easily meet government requirements for lands and grants. She remains president of the society.

She also had raised enough funds by March 1976 to begin operating a small Cessna 185 airplane that had been donated by Immanuel Church in Calgary, Alberta. The use of airplanes would greatly expand Kayy's outreach into the eastern regions across the Northwest Territories into what is now the Inuit's homeland—Nunavut Territory (see story on page 48).

The introduction of airplanes into the ministry also brought new danger and threatened to end the ministry.

In March 1978, pilot Royden Janz, a dedicated Christian, was scheduled to pick up Kayy at Cambridge Bay to fly the Cessna 185 south to Winnipeg, Manitoba, for a maintenance checkup and to give Kayy a break. Hours before Kayy was to leave, she got a call from a pastor's wife in Washington, D.C., to compliment her on her book, *God's Fire on Ice*, which Kayy did not know had finally been released.

"When I heard that, I decided that I should not go with Royden but should go west to my home church in Vancouver to begin presenting my book in my home church," she says.

After celebrating the release at Glad Tidings church, Kayy came home to her apartment and learned that the ministry airplane had crashed about a mile from Janz's home in Steinbach, Manitoba. Janz, married with five children, was killed.

The loss of Janz and the airplane greatly discouraged the Inuit believers, but God quickly taught them a lesson in faith. Kayy was invited to appear on The PTL Club with Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker. The Bakkers interviewed Kayy before millions of viewers about her Arctic ministry and the loss of Janz and the plane.

They then asked viewers each to send \$1 to help Kayy get another plane. By the time she got back to Vancouver, she had nine big bags of mail—and \$32,000 mostly in \$1 bills.

Within five months of the crash, Kayy's ministry—with more support from Immanuel Church—gained use of a twin-engine Piper Aztec airplane, and her ministry soared on wings again.

Turning Point

By April 1983, Kayy's Arctic missions work had produced a Bible school that began in Cambridge Bay and now operates in Rankin Inlet. Churches had been planted in villages across the far north. Her mission to evangelize, disciple and send out Inuits to reach their own people was coming to pass at a rate that far exceeded her expectations.

In fact, Kayy was so pleased with the progress that she planned to transfer full-time oversight of the Arctic work to a promising group of leaders God had prepared under her. She then would be free to travel in North America to raise more funds for Arctic missions and have time to minister in other countries.

But another tragedy struck, taking some of the mission's finest leaders.

Pilot Bill Goward, assistant supervisor of Arctic Missions for Glad Tidings, revved up the ministry airplane on April 6, 1983, to take Kayy, pastor Lynn Patterson and a guest minister from Rankin Inlet to Coral Harbor, where they would conduct a short-term Bible seminar.

Goward flew up to Repulse Bay to pick up church leaders who wanted to attend the seminar. As a storm brewed near Coral Harbor, Goward's passengers boarded: new pastor Paul Suisangnark and his adult son Solomoni; and two of Kayy's

finest Bible school graduates, David and Cathy Tulugak, and their 10-month-old daughter, Holly. It was a routine one-hour flight.

The airplane crashed in the storm just 26 miles north of Coral Harbor's airport, burning badly, and all aboard were killed on impact. Kayy was asked to identify the bodies.

"I became angry," Kayy says. "I said: 'Lord, it is not fair! Why should these young people be wiped out when they were so dedicated?' Especially troubling to me was the baby's death."

Then in an instant, God showed Kayy all the hundreds of Inuit who had been blessed by the airplane ministry, how people were changed, saved, delivered and empowered to reach others. And Kayy had to accept the deaths that she did not understand.

"From that moment, the burden of it lifted off of me," Kayy says.

"And out of bitter came sweet," she continues. "God is never a loser! In the months after the tragedy, many, many [people] dedicated and rededicated their lives to Christ. Many young people were touched. Many relatives responded, saying they wanted to finish the job that their loved ones gave their lives to do."

In addition, Kayy dropped her plan to leave full-time work in the Arctic.

"That was my turning everything. It seemed a lot more settled for me after that. I accepted what happened as God's plan and

knew that He also had more for me to do in the Arctic.”

Today, Kayy looks back in awe at the network of some 12 churches planted across the forgotten lands of ice and snow and the Rankin Inlet Bible school that is recognized by the Canadian government. As she edges closer to her 70s and retirement years, Kayy has plenty of work to do before turning over Arctic missions to other servants.

“There are some 32 Inuit communities scattered throughout Nunavut, and we have been to about 26 of them over the years,” Kayy explains. “The whole key to me is that the Inuit now are carrying this move of God into their churches. The mantle has fallen on them, and they are running with the message.”

She’s blessed with uncanny vigor and health, and the younger Charisma reporter who followed her on the recent Arctic tour found it tough to keep up. Kayy is planning another Arctic tour in March 2001 with evangelist Rodney Howard-Browne.

“It is the principle Paul said to Timothy—to commit the truth to faithful men who will be able to teach others,” Kayy says.

“As a missionary, I would not feel that I have completed my work if the torch of truth had not been gripped by local hands.

“I am so blessed to see my vision come to pass in my lifetime.”

Billy Bruce is news editor for Charisma. He traveled with Kayy Gordon for a week in the Arctic last March.

Claiming Nunavut For God

Canada's newest territory is proof of God's love for the Inuit.

It's a miracle similar to the 1948 return of Israel to the Jews. After centuries of displacement and roaming through a native land now dominated by white descendants of Europeans, the Inuit people were granted their own homeland. On April 1, 1999, the Canadian government formally created Nunavut Territory, and the Nunavut flag was raised over the capital, Iqaluit, for the first time.

Nunavut, a land mass the size of western Europe, was carved from the Northwest Territories to provide the Inuit people a chance for self-government. Nunavut means "our land" in Inuktitut, the Inuit language.

Thirty years of negotiations between the Canadian government and Inuit leaders culminated in the largest land-claims settlement in Canadian history—with no violence or protests. It was a testament, Kayy Gordon believes, to the peaceful, humble nature of the Inuit people.

Despite its size, Nunavut is home to a mere 28,000 people, 85 percent of whom are Inuit. The small population is attributable to the harsh Arctic climate and the difficulties of travel in and out of the region. Half the population is under the age of 25.

Fifteen of the 19 people elected to serve on the Nunavut Territorial Legislature are Inuit. While the issues of merging an ancient culture into a capitalistic society are complex, one factor working in the Nunavut leadership's favor is prayer, Kayy says.

"It is wonderful that many of the people involved in the Nunavut government are Spirit-filled Christians," she says. "It is common for them to get together and pray about governmental issues and to ask for God's wisdom."

It was only 50 years ago that the Inuit lived in mostly cultural ways as superb hunters, living off the fat and meat of whale, walrus, seal, musk ox, caribou and fish. Their religious tradition involved a spiritism similar to the shamans, or medicine men, of other occultic religions. Kayy taught the Inuit spiritual warfare and how to cast the spirits out in Jesus' name.

"At least 95 percent of the people in the North believe in the spirit world," Kayy states in her book *Arctic Ablaze*. "They know about, or have seen dark figures coming into a room. They know about the anagkok, or shaman power, to make bears or wolves appear, or to make people sick."

The Nunavut flag shows an inuksuk—a stack of stones placed in the shape of a man—as the symbol of ancient Inuit culture.

Some Inuit oppose the use of the ancient symbol on their flag because they believe it tells the world that the Inuit are a people stuck in past traditions who can't move forward in a fast-changing society. Kayy applauds the Inuit who oppose clinging to the old ways but says she spent little time during

her pioneering years trying to explain away Inuit traditions. Rather, like the apostle Paul, Kayy wanted to “become a Roman to reach the Romans,” and accept the wholesome aspects of the Inuit culture.

“I felt I was called to preach the more abundant life in Christ to release them from all the powers of darkness and the old ways,” Kayy says. “I found that I wanted them to focus on Jesus and on the Holy Spirit. I didn’t mess with the traditional thing. And I saw the power of God break it off many lives.”

The Inuit are intensely social, according to Lois Neely, who co-wrote two books about Kayy’s ministry—*God’s Fire On Ice* and *Arctic Ablaze*—with Kayy. She says their way of life changed significantly after World War II.

“The world of the Canadian Eskimo was changed forever when Distant Early Warning (DEW) stations were thrown up all across the Canadian Arctic,” Neely wrote in her forward to *Arctic Ablaze*. Along with searches for minerals and oil came helicopters and jet aircraft. Igloos made way for heated homes with running water and color television.

Today, Inuit youth can access the Internet and see the world outside of the Arctic on satellite TV. The lack of career opportunities in an economy limited to mineral mining, DEW stations, oil refineries, and arts and crafts manufacturing leaves many youth feeling trapped. Rising crime and suicide rates among teens and adults are becoming so numerous that the Canadian government has stepped in to provide counseling and rehabilitation programs.

But Kayy has brought the real answer of Jesus to two generations of Inuit, and she's preparing an outreach base in the Arctic that will last for years. "I do look forward to seeing those who follow in my footsteps," she says. "The Inuit people are catching God's fire."

Warming Hearts in Yellowknife

Another brave woman, Lynn Patterson, is reaching the Arctic region for Christ.

In the bustling city of Yellowknife, the capital of the Northwest Territories, miners have dug for gold since the early 1990s, drawing in hundreds of people to settle in this center of Arctic activity.

Considered the capital of the Arctic, Yellowknife is home to some 20,000 residents and the territorial legislature. There are a few skyscrapers, hotels, convention centers, an airport and a regional hospital.

Despite a mining tragedy in 1992 that killed 11 men and temporarily closed down the gold mines, miners now are exploring the area for diamonds. The city's commerce, combined with its stature as a base for regional politics and Arctic tourism, make Yellowknife a hub in the far north.

Today, Arctic missions led by two women are preparing the city as a future base for outreach across the frozen north. Kayy Gordon, president of the Glad Tidings Arctic Missions Society, planted seeds of ministry in Yellowknife during her many years of missions work. Kayy found a dedicated servant in Lynn Patterson some two decades ago.

Since 1991, Lynn has pastored Glad Tidings Fellowship in Yellowknife, a small church of about 125 parishioners. The church enjoys a strong multicultural mix of native Indians, Caribbean blacks, Inuit, whites and Metis (pronounced MA-tee), who are half white, half Indian.

A river of revival is flowing in the church. More than 1,700 people were saved in meetings with Kayy and Rodney Howard-Browne in March. Some 32 Cree Indians drove 2,400 miles from Saskatchewan to attend the meetings. They took the revival back to their village of Pinehouse, and now have a thriving church of 300.

"They all got filled with the Holy Ghost," Lynn told Charisma. "I water-baptized them all and sent them home. I even married a couple that had been living out of wedlock. They got right with God before they went home!"

Lynn also is supervisor of Glad Tidings Arctic Missions and frequently travels to Arctic villages visiting the 12 churches raised up by Kayy. Lynn was 28 when she answered God's call to serve in the Arctic. She worked in Canada's criminal justice system in the south and planned only to help Kayy with her Bible school in Cambridge Bay.

"I went for two months. Twenty years later, I'm still there," Lynn says. She was in Coral Harbor with Kayy in April 1983 when a plane crash claimed pilot Bill Goward, four members of Kayy's missions team, and an infant.

"We made a covenant with God that if our friends could die for the cause of God, we could live for the cause of winning

people to the Lord,” Lynn says. “When everyone was wiped out—we carried on.”

As a result of the mining and tourism boom in Yellowknife, property values have increased tremendously. The Yellowknife church can’t afford their rented space in a shopping mall much longer.

“We own about one acre, and we plan to build a church there,” Lynn says. “But it would cost us \$800,000 Canadian—about \$500,000 U.S. dollars—to build. It costs 2-1/2 times more to build in the Arctic because everything has to be flown or trucked in from the south. The closest city for supplies is Edmonton, Alberta, and that’s nearly 1,000 miles away.”

Lynn wants to expand Kayy’s ministry base at Yellowknife to create a hub from which to launch missions teams into the Arctic. A critical need for ministry to youth has evolved as the north populates at an incredible rate. The Northwest Territories also has the highest youth suicide rate of any Canadian province or territory.

“I attribute a lot of the suicide to the darkness in winter, the isolation of smaller communities in the north, and drugs and alcohol,” Lynn says. “But the gospel is making a big difference.”

She spent nine years in Rankin Inlet and a year in Cambridge Bay before coming to Yellowknife. She’s admired Kayy’s determination for 20 years, and says a new generation of missionaries will be responsible for carrying on Kayy’s work.

“We travel by plane—she traveled by dog sled,” Lynn says. “We can’t forget what people like Kayy Gordon did. She blazed the trail.”

When the Men Didn’t Go, These Women Did

Kayy Gordon heard God’s call to go north. It was that simple. She was 19 years old when she heard the call and 22 when she finally arrived in the primitive Arctic of the mid-1950s.

Lynn Patterson was 28 years old when she first traveled north with Kayy. Twenty years later, Lynn is still working for the Lord in the harsh northland.

And the two of them are raising up women pastors among the Inuit, like Hattie Alagalak in Arviat.

It seems the farther into this harsh frontier these women go to serve as ministers, the less trouble their gender presents to them as they fill leadership roles that more traditionally are held by men. And they’ve done it through grace and with respect for their fellow male ministers of the gospel.

Kayy had a tough time convincing her pastor, Reg Layzell, that God really did have a mission for her in the Arctic. But Kayy believes that had little to do with her gender.

“Pastor Layzell was a disciplinarian, but a real revivalist at the same time,” Kayy says of her mentor, who is deceased. “He

was the way he was because he was so anxious to develop ministry that would last. I have a tremendous respect for him.”

Kayy’s worst troubles with prejudice against female ministers occurred in the early 1960s. An Anglican bishop gave an Anglican minister in Cambridge Bay an ultimatum to get her out of town, but Kayy says it was her Pentecostal, full gospel message that got her in trouble with the bishop—not her gender. And most of the opposition she faced was a result of her preaching Pentecostal doctrine, although some Inuits once tried to cast a curse on her.

“They looked at me more as a threat because of the message I brought. They didn’t see that we were all on the same team,” she says. When she traveled in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, she ran into some opposition because of her gender, but she says it was minimal.

“Some people would say they didn’t like a woman preacher, but I have had men come to me after a service and tell me they changed their minds,” Kayy says. “How can you knock that? I do know some have been terribly adverse in all this, but I haven’t experienced that.

“My attitude has been whenever anything negative is said, I don’t respond to it,” she continues. “I just get about what God has called me to do. It just doesn’t seem to be too controversial an area with me. In fact, I have had so much help and support from male pastors that I feel men have treated me not badly at all.”

Kayy has been so busy in ministry that she never married,

although she's been courted a time or two. "It's true I did have others show an interest in me, but I simply felt too fulfilled in life to get involved," she says.

Lynn, 48, says she's single because God hasn't brought her the man who will share in her busy ministry travels in the north.

"A husband? He'd have to be someone who had a real call of God on his life to travel to 14 different Arctic communities," Lynn says. "I'm a lady. I will never chase a man. If God has a man for me, I'll know it."

Lynn too says she's had little trouble as a female pastor and evangelist. She attributes that to her respectful strategy toward men.

"Women are created to be ladies. I'm not a women's libber. I'm only liberated because of Jesus," Lynn says.

"I always honored the men in our ministry. I never got into a debate over this issue because both men and women died in those plane crashes that took our fellow ministers," she says. "I didn't think gender was the issue. I thought getting people saved was the issue."

-Billy Bruce