

Rodney Howard-Browne Leads Artic campaign

EVANGELIST PLANS ANNUAL TOURS OF INUIT VILLAGES AFTER MARCH VISIT.

In the Arctic, some of the coldest places on earth are just wood stoves of revival lying in wait for the strike of an evangelist's match. A recent jaunt into the high north by a Florida-based ministry team, however, found the Arctic already ablaze with a move of God among the region's indigenous peoples—thanks largely to the tireless efforts of a woman missionary.

In the treeless land of polar bears, caribou, the Aurora Borealis and extreme winters that often challenge the very existence of human life, South African evangelist Rodney Howard-Browne found a spiritually hungry, broken and humble people among the Inuit people—known more generally as the Eskimo people.

Howard-Browne's six-village tour in northern Canada last March stoked a desire in the minister to continue annual crusades above the tree line. He plans to return each year to new stops in the

30-plus Inuit villages in Canada's Arctic regions, including several stops in Nunavut (NU)—the newly created Canadian province that divided the Northwest Territories (NWT) to provide a homeland for the Inuit people.

"I live for this," Howard-Browne told Charisma as he choked back tears, watching the indigenous natives raise their hands

in worship, some weeping and others trembling as God's presence enveloped the room during the trip's first session in Arviat, NU.

Inuit, which means "The People" in the indigenous language of Inuktitut, are known in some places as the Eskimo people, though that term is not preferred among the indigenous residents of Nunavut.

It was Vancouver missionary Kayy Gordon's lifelong sacrifice to spread the gospel to the Inuit that inspired Howard-Browne to visit the Arctic for the first time in 1999, when he made a stop in Rankin Inlet on the western shore of Hudson Bay.

He returned this year with a nine-member ministry team that included Gordon, RMI music pastors Jimmy and Becky Pearce, staff pastor and singer-songwriter James McCurdy, and RMI evangelism coordinator Bojan Jancic.

The troupe traveled on a chartered, one-prop plane across thousands of miles of barren, frozen fields of snow-covered tundra, bringing gospel music, praise and worship, preaching, prayer, and revival-pitched altar services into town halls crammed full of villagers and their children. They found among the snow-bound villages of Arviat, Coral Harbour, Baker Lake, Yellowknife, Cambridge Bay and Taloyoak a refreshing warmth of humility and openness to the gospel not readily found on the streets of their own American homeland.

Mayors in Arviat and Coral Harbour attended the meetings to greet the evangelists with gifts and to profess their own faith in Christ before their constituents. Arviat Mayor David Alagalakuk, whose wife pastors a church there, offered Howard-

Browne the traditional harpoon's head to the city and Coral Harbour's mayor offered the village to God: "I just want to see God have His way with our people," the tearful mayor explained.

Team members were humbled by the Inuit's simple faith.

"They're a very kind people—they have a tendency to take care of one another," said music pastor Jimmy Pearce. "They have this bond with one another—even if they aren't acquainted. They take care of their neighbors. What's embarrassing is that we used to be that way in the U.S. But even some Christians tend to be standoffish."

Team member James McCurdy marveled at the young children. "The kids may have seemed distracted during the services—walking around or talking," he said. "But when the altar calls were given, many of them were sobbing and weeping—they were really pressing in."

"And in Taloyoak, they'd never heard the gospel. The kids got saved, and then they begged Rodney to bless them. Rodney prayed for them, and they all fell into a pile, rolling and laughing. Now no one will ever be able to tell these kids the joy of the Lord is not real."