

Voices in the Wilderness

In my last column I spoke of the current 300-year absence in the body of Christ of nationally recognized First Nations leaders. Though three centuries have gone by without a First Nations leader having a prominent voice in the church in America, there are Native leaders emerging today who have a passion for Jesus and are moved to action by a love for their people.

Like King David of ancient Israel, they have fully embraced God's purposes in their generation. Acts 13:36 says David served God's purposes in his generation, then fell asleep. In like manner, every generation witnesses the favor of God on people who become consumed with a vision from the Father's heart.

Some of these people in our generation are the First Nations leaders who are arising today. I want to introduce you to a few of them. I ask for forgiveness from the many who aren't mentioned here but certainly would be if space permitted.

* Terry LeBlanc, Mi-kmaq/Acadian, is manager of aboriginal programs for World Vision Canada. He was on staff with Youth for Christ for 14 years. Because of his broad ministry experience, he is in great demand as a conference speaker and university lecturer. He is a gifted communicator in missions, cross-cultural understanding, community development and planning.

* Mary Glazier, Haida, is the founder of Windwalkers International and of an intercessory prayer network in Alaska.

She serves on the national Facilitation Committee for Mission America and has been an international board member of Women's Aglow ministry. She moves powerfully in prophetic and intercessory prayer and is a seasoned Bible teacher and mentor of women.

* Adrian Jacobs, Cayuga, from the Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy in Ontario, Canada, is the general director of Wesleyan Native American Ministries. He is one of the most insightful Native thinkers, theologians and communicators who is reflecting the non-Western contributions of Native people.

He teaches a clear biblical message about missions, Christian worldview, cross-cultural communication and leadership development. He has founded a church on his home reserve and has developed a college-level Bible training course.

* Randy Woodley, Keetoowah Cherokee, is the founder of Eagle's Wings Ministry. He is a front-runner in First Nations ministry who has developed evangelistic and discipleship models that are thoroughly Bible-based yet radically cultural in Native form and style. He is gifted at challenging people to love the lost enough to learn to understand them and at teaching diversity issues, cross-cultural communication and contextualized Native ministry. He is the author of *Living in Color: Embracing God's Passion for Diversity* (Chosen).

* Jonathan Maracle, Mohawk, is founder of Broken Walls ministry and an emerging First Nations songwriter and worship leader. He incorporates the sounds and styles of traditional Native and contemporary music into a clear Christ-centered focus. He has released two CDs: *Rise Up Mighty Warrior* and *Clearly Hear His Voice*.

Others include Lynda Prince, Honorary Grand Chief, Carrier/Sekani, and founder of 120 Drums Worship Ministry; Art "Whitehawk" Begay, Lakota, founder of Warriors for Christ; Ray Aldred, Cree, national director of First Nations Alliance (C&MA) Churches of Canada; Bryan Brightcloud, Apache, national coordinator of Native Foursquare churches; and Jon Lansa, Hopi, Native representative for The Navigators.

These are only a handful of those who deserve to be mentioned. I will introduce you to others in future columns. Any of them would make excellent ministry partners or speakers at conferences or meetings.

Don Richardson, noted author of *Eternity in Their Hearts* (Gospel Light) and renowned speaker on missions says of these emerging First Nations leaders: "It is my hope that Christians everywhere will pray for these new leaders. Their message is like a healing balm for the many racist wounds inflicted over time."

Richard Twiss is Rosebud Lakota/Sioux and the president of Wiconi International. He is a popular speaker, diversity-awareness trainer and author of *One Church, Many Tribes* (Regal). He lives in Washington state with his wife and four sons. Visit him on the Web at www.wiconi.org.