

Real People. Real Life. Real Hope!

TRIBAL TRAILS



ncem

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News & Views

www.TribalTrails.org

A department of
NORTHERN CANADA EVANGELICAL MISSION



CELEBRATING 40 YEARS!

Forty years ago a ministry was launched enabling First Nations believers to reach their own people for Christ. As we celebrate this milestone, we look back to how it all began and see God's hand in it all!

It was the mid-1970s, and our NCEM mission leaders were aware that the soon coming launch of satellite TV broadcasting to northern communities would open up a new way to spread the Gospel. There already were Christian TV programs that some First Nations viewers could tune into, but something more was needed – the Good News needed to be shared in a relevant way to Indigenous viewers.

In 1977 Derrick & Jean Hiscox were sitting in the dining hall at Prairie Bible Institute, having brought their son to high school. A number of NCEM missionaries were on campus that day, too, as a conference was just concluding. Across the room Jean recognized Bud & Marge Elford, who she hadn't seen since Bible school days. A minute later Derrick joined them. The Hiscoxes told the Elfords how they had returned from missionary service in Brazil and were now involved in pastoral and TV ministry to Portuguese people in southern Ontario.

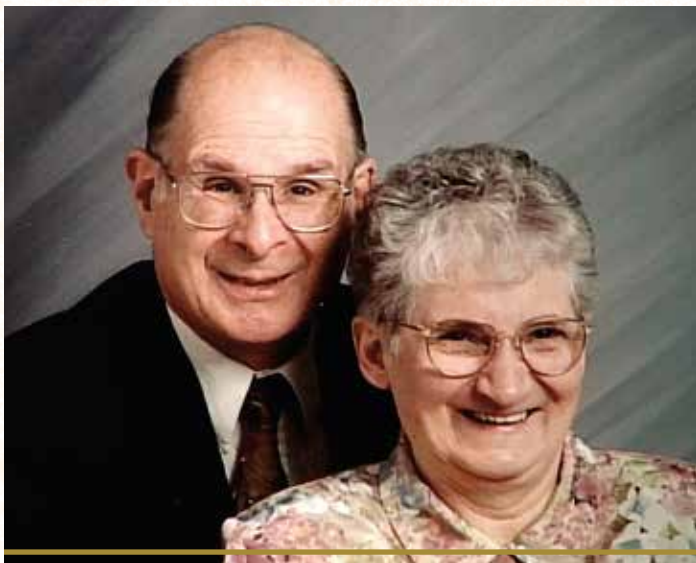
Bud was an NCEM field director, and he asked Derrick & Jean if they knew anyone who might be interested in helping get a First Nations TV ministry started. Derrick & Jean gave Bud some names, but in the following months it was their own names that came to mind most often. There were many unknowns, though ... so many details in starting a TV ministry from scratch. The Hiscoxes weren't sure what God would have them do, but they had an underlying confidence in His guiding hand. In 1979 they officially joined NCEM, but even then the launching of a TV program was still only a vision.

REALISTIC CONCERNS

Derrick & Jean talked to missionaries, Indigenous people, and TV stations about it. They received a lot of encouragement, but there were realistic concerns, too. Where would the production staff come from? Could we produce a program that would meet

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industry standards? Some thought it might be too difficult finding enough Native believers willing and not “too shy” to share on camera. Perhaps the most often-heard concern was the high financial cost.



Derrick & Jean Hiscox shared recently: “We were there at the start, but we know it was God’s doing that Tribal Trails got off the ground and onto the air. Others also carried on behind the scenes, including Blaine (& Rachel) Witherow, who has served almost all of these 40 years. His technical work and oversight has been crucial.”

The Hiscoxes learned that a growing number of northern villages already had their own local TV stations and were looking for programs reflecting First Nations lifestyle. Cable stations in cities, too, were interested in something produced for an Indigenous audience. Of utmost concern to Derrick & Jean was having the definite commitment from at least a few Indigenous believers to join them full-time. Derrick was praying and sharing about the need wherever he could, but he had also felt led to wait for First Nations Christians to take the initiative and say, “I want to do this.” So far no one had pledged to help.

Then, on what they thought might be Derrick’s last trip out west from Ontario before giving up on this ministry idea, three people individually told him that they’d like to help full-time. In May 1980, three “answers to prayer” – Fred Evans, Donna Anderson & Nancy Buck – travelled to Ontario where a pilot program was produced with rented video equipment.

PURPOSE & FORMAT

In late 1979 a three-fold TV ministry purpose was stated: (1) “Take the Gospel message into areas where a missionary may not have opportunity to visit”; (2) “Reinforce the Word which has been communicated already”; and (3) “Provide opportunity for Native Christians to share their faith.”

At the time there were hardly any TV programs, even secular, that were directed specifically to this audience. It would be a powerful force in bringing the Gospel message to First Nations! That didn’t mean that there would no longer be need for mis-

sionaries – TV was recognized as a “tool” for missionaries and First Nations evangelists and churches.

Originally a few different formats for the half-hour weekly program were considered. After production began, though, it was the interview-testimony format interspersed with music that caught on. Bible teaching by Indigenous pastors would be included regularly but, for the most part, the program would consist of Indigenous believers sharing what Christ has done for them. It would be Native people communicating with Native people, demonstrating the power of the Gospel by their changed lives. English would be used on the program because it would be broadcasted across widespread areas to Canada’s more than 50 distinct First Nations, Métis & Inuit.

It was during the pilot taping sessions in Ontario that the newly formed team batted around ideas for a program name. “Tribal Trails” was one that everybody liked. Fred Evans grabbed his guitar and within a day had written and recorded the words and tune that are still our introductory theme song.

PRODUCING THE FIRST PROGRAMS

In 1981 Derrick & Jean and their teenage children moved to Prince Albert, setting up a studio in the basement of NCEM’s office building. Donna Anderson and Nancy Buck had both finished Bible school and the first Tribal Trails staff got down to the work of producing a weekly program. Fred Evans, however, didn’t feel led to leave his evangelistic ministry based in Manitoba. Donna would host the program and interview guests while Nancy, along with Derrick, would do the taping and editing. Jean assisted with program planning and office tasks.



Looking back to the beginning, Donna Anderson Lakey, our first Tribal Trails program host, recently shared: “We chose ‘Tribal Trails’ as the name for our new program. There’s a line in the theme song that says, ‘The Son of God, He is near.’ That is what we wanted to give out to people – that God is real, and that He wants to walk with us in life. Tribal Trails encourages people to start that walk, and to keep that walk.”

There was office and studio equipment to buy, scripts to write ... there was travelling, interviewing, taping, and editing ... there was work! Derrick estimated that it was taking at least 150 “person-hours” to produce each half-hour program. Forty new programs were required per year. How would the small staff meet the demanding schedule?

It was obvious that God was in it, providing in many ways. Within the space of three years God brought eight more workers to Tribal Trails. God provided Indigenous participants for the program, as well. The first major “taping trip” to Ontario and Manitoba in the fall of 1981 proved that God would supply guests for the program – First Nations Christians who gladly shared their testimonies and songs.



Rita Anderson, a long-serving program host, writes, “A television program for the Native Peoples by the people. Wow! What a dream or concept, and yet it became a reality. More amazing — it’s been on the air for 40 years. God is so good.”

ON THE AIR

Tribal Trails’ first public broadcast was February 1982 on Cable 6 in Yellowknife, NWT. About a dozen other communities would soon broadcast the program on their local cable stations at no charge. It was the commercial stations that would reach a larger audience, including rural Reserves: in April 1982, CHFD in Thunder Bay (ON) was first, followed by CKBI in Prince Albert (SK). By 1983, commercial stations in Dawson Creek, Prince George, Terrace (BC), and Yorkton (SK) had been added. North Pole (Alaska) and Lloydminster (SK/AB) would join the list. In 1995 a major station in Winnipeg was added.

“We’re pretty excited ... these days,” read the opening line of a report in 1986. A goal – stated five years earlier – of broadcasting nation-wide by satellite had been met! On February 16, 1986, Tribal Trails was released for the first time on ITV. Besides a 70-mile radius of Edmonton, ITV (by use of Anik D Satellite) would reach over 330 communities in every province and territory in Canada (up to 1300 communities by the 1990s). The resulting increased response from viewers, and subsequent spiritual follow-up, demonstrated that the increased cost of broadcasting was well worth it.

FRONT COVER: (left) Fred & Charlotte Evans, 1982; (right) Host Conrad Flett interviewing Carl & Cathy Crane, 2020.

VIEWER RESPONSE

Were First Nations viewers actually tuning in? Derrick & Jean tell of their first trip to northeastern Manitoba where they videotaped the testimonies of several young Native Christians in Island Lake. Their next stop was Red Sucker Lake, where they met with a pastor and told him about the new video recordings they had with them. The pastor immediately walked down to the local TV station, went “live” and announced, “We’re going to cut the movies out because we’ve got some videos of our own people we want to see.” Soon the whole village was watching Tribal Trails host Donna Anderson and her guests.

How many have been watching Tribal Trails all these years? That is difficult to accurately say, of course. At one point, two Saskatchewan TV stations indicated that Tribal Trails was their most watched religious program on Sunday mornings. More important than a specific number has been the effectiveness of Tribal Trails in touching lives. Right from the start, letters came back from viewers expressing appreciation and seeking spiritual help. A significant increase in responses came in 1991, the year we began displaying a phone number across Canada offering spiritual help.

OPENING DOORS

Our program has opened many doors for personal ministry in First Nations homes and communities. While people may naturally be suspicious of a stranger, the missionary who identifies himself with Tribal Trails often finds that he and his message have already been introduced. Our program also encourages believers. One of the first responses in 1982 came from a viewer who said that they’d been a Christian for years but didn’t know how to witness. When they saw First Nations people witnessing on our program, they gained enough confidence to try themselves. That same day their relatives heard about their faith in Christ!

“It is the prayers and gifts of God’s people that have encouraged and enabled us to carry on this long.”

Indigenous believers who tune in find that they are not alone in their faith – that there are other Christians like themselves. That can be a tremendous encouragement, especially to those who live in isolated communities where there is little or no Christian fellowship available. Viewers recognize Tribal Trails guests as “real people” who “tell it like it is.” These are people who don’t just mention the victories in their lives; they tell how God lifted them up and brought them back when they were down and out.

Lord willing, Tribal Trails plans to continue past 40. We’ve added radio broadcasting and online viewing. As from the start, we strive to respond to all inquirers and arrange personal visits, where possible. Our prayer team prays regularly for needs mentioned by viewers. On an anniversary like this, we’re reminded that it is the prayers and gifts of God’s people that have encouraged and enabled us to carry on this long. We’re humbled to think that the Lord has used Tribal Trails for 40 years to present **“Real People. Real Life. Real Hope!”**



JOIN US for a trip
down memory lane as
we celebrate a **TRIBAL
TRAILS** milestone!

**Watch our six special
40th Anniversary
programs:**

A Dream

Fred & Charlotte Evans share how they got involved with Tribal Trails when it was just an idea—one that would eventually become a reality. They discuss how the theme song and name originated.



Tribal Trails—New Beginnings

Donna Anderson Lakey and Rita Anderson reflect on the beginnings of Tribal Trails as it started small and grew to a program that is watched all over Canada and beyond.



Through The Years with The Singing Hills

Kari, Kim and Corrie of *The Singing Hills* reminisce how their family's musical ministry developed and how partnering with Tribal Trails impacted them.



Through The Years with The Singing Hills (part 2)

The three sisters discuss songs that have had special meaning to them through the years and their testimony that what God did for their family, He can do for others.



Bert & Liz Genaille "The First Testimonies"

Bert & Liz's first involvement with Tribal Trails was sharing their testimonies. Over the next 40 years, they would also share their music, teach, and even host the show!



Memories with Bill Jackson

Bill shares his memories about the background events and beginnings of the Tribal Trails ministry and reveals how it is a story of God leading and working through His people.



HOW TO WATCH:

Search for "40th" on TribalTrails.org or ask us for a copy on DVD or USB thumbdrive.



WAYS TO DONATE ...

Check our website or phone 306-764-3388 for details.



TRIBAL TRAILS IS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE GIFTS OF INTERESTED PEOPLE.

TV BROADCAST STATIONS

			AIR-TIME COSTS
Nationally	Vision TV	Mon.-Fri. 1:00 pm & Mon. 2:30 am ET	\$406/day
Maritimes	CTV Atlantic	Sun. 10:30 am AT	595/week
Thunder Bay, ON	Global Thunder Bay CHFD	Sun. 9:00 am ET	368/week
Burlington, ON	Yes TV Ontario	Sun. 12:00 pm ET	1050/week
Winnipeg, MB	Global Winnipeg CKND	Sun. 9:00 am CT	1231/week
Winnipeg, MB	FaithTV 11 CIIT	Sun. 1:00 pm & 11:30 pm & Sat. 3:30 pm & Mon.-Fri. 2:00 pm CT	406/week 203/day
Saskatchewan	CTV Saskatchewan	Sun. 11:30 am CST	1979/week
Lloydminster, SK	CITL	Sun. 9:00 am MT	225/week
Medicine Hat, AB	CHAT-TV	Sun. 8:00 am & 11:00 am MT	178/week
Lethbridge, AB	Miracle Channel CJIL	Sat. 2:30 pm & Tues. 6:00 am & Mon.-Fri. 10:30 pm MT	475/week 275/day
Edmonton, AB	Yes TV Edmonton	Sun. 12:30 pm & Tues. 6:00 am MT	165/week
Calgary, AB	Yes TV Calgary	Sun. 12:30 pm & Tues. 6:00 am MT	165/week
Terrace, BC	CFTK	Sun. 3:30 pm PT	135/week
Vancouver, BC	JoyTV 10 CHNU	Sun. 6:00 am & 4:00 pm & 11:00 pm & Mon.-Fri. 11:00 pm PT	418/week 203/day
Prince George, BC	CKPG	Sun. 6:00 am & 10:30 am PT	167/week
Kamloops, BC	CFJC-TV	Sun. 6:00 am & 10:30 am PT	167/week
Dawson Creek, BC	CJDC	Sun. 9:00 am PT	130/week

COMMUNITY CABLE STATIONS

Check your local TV listing for air time:

British Columbia	Terrace, Kitimat & Prince Rupert (CityWest Community Television)	Sun. 3:00 pm
Saskatchewan	Regina, North Battleford, Meadow Lake, Yorkton (Access7)	Sun. 8:00 am
	Prince Albert (Shaw Spotlight)	Tues. 6:30 pm & Sun. 4:00 pm & 10:30 pm

RADIO STATIONS & NETWORKS

CKTP The Wolf	(Fredericton, NB) 95.7 FM	Sun. 8:30 am	
The Rock Radio	(Yorkton, SK) 98.5 FM	Sun. 4:00 pm	
CIOT Lighthouse	(Nipawin, SK) 104.1 FM	Thurs. & Sat. 7:00 pm	
CJNE The Storm	(Nipawin, SK) 94.7 FM	Sun. 10:00 am	
Reindeer Lake	(Southend, SK) 97.9 FM	Mon., Wed. & Friday 9:30 am	
CFNK Minahik Achimowin Radio	(Pinehouse Lake, SK) 89.9 FM		
CIJA-FM Aboriginal Christian Voice Network	(Prince Rupert, BC) 100.7 FM	Sun. 9:00 pm PST	
CIAM Radio	(BC, AB, SK)	Sun. 3:00 am & 2:00 pm & 10:00 pm & Fri. 11:00 pm	
For info and complete station list visit ciamradio.com			
CHON-FM	(Yukon) 98.1 & 90.5 FM	Sun. 7:00 am	
For info and complete station list visit chonfm.com			
CJTL FM	(NEFC across western Canada)	Daily at Midnight & 10:00 am	
For info and complete station list visit cjtl.ca			
MBC-Missinipi Broadcasting Corporation (SK)		Sun. 8:30 am	\$175/week
For info and complete station list visit mbcradio.com			
CFWE	(Alberta) FM	Sun. 5:00 pm	150/week
CJWE	(Calgary, AB) FM	Sun. 5:00 pm	90/week
For info and complete station list visit cfweradio.ca			
CJFW Pure Country	(Terrace, BC) 103.1 FM	Sun. 7:00 am & 9:00 pm	200/week

INTERNET

Watch us on the internet anytime at TribalTrails.org



Tribal Trails News & Views is the newsletter of NCEM-TV, a department of Northern Canada Evangelical Mission (NCEM), issued two or three times a year. Subscriptions are free (donations towards costs are appreciated).

Since the early 1980s NCEM's television ministry has reached across racial, religious, and geographical barriers with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Your involvement through prayer, financial giving, and other personal contributions can make a difference in the lives of First Nations people who Christ loves and for whom He gave His life.

Addresses: All correspondence (other than US financial or US address changes) should be sent to: Tribal Trails / NCEM-TV

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In Canada please make all cheques payable to: NCEM-TV or Tribal Trails.

In the US please make all checks payable to Tribal Trails and send to:
9169 W. State Street, Suite 500, Boise ID 83714

Designated Giving Policy: Spending of funds is confined to NCEM Board/Officers approved programs and projects. Each contribution designated towards a Board/Officers approved program or project will be used as designated with the understanding that when the need for such a program or project has been met, or the Board/Officers have determined it cannot be completed, the remaining contributions designated for such program or project will be used where needed most.

A financial statement is available upon request. Pre-authorized and online giving is now available. Visit our website or contact us for more information.

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