

# Soaring Eagle Tepachimowin

## 2003 Annual Conference In the City of Bridges

It is always amazing to see how far and to what expense people will travel to attend a Rising Above conference. This year, was no exception. Some came from Labrador and British Columbia and many points in between.

This was the first time in its eleven year history that Rising Above has been to Saskatchewan. The conference was held in the Radisson Hotel downtown Saskatoon, the city of bridges. The hotel is situated alongside the Saskatchewan river. The beautiful view of the river was a constant reminder of God's river of mercy and grace that revives weary and wounded hearts.

One of the unique strengths of the Rising Above conference is that abuse is-

sues are addressed straightforwardly. The speakers talked very honestly about their own stories and how true healing can only be experienced through Jesus. The sessions evoked many feelings among the listeners but the conference atmosphere offered a safe place for people to enter into the trauma of their abuse and find healing. The staff of qualified counselors were available upon request to provide individual counseling.



The sharing circles were a tremendous source of comfort, support and healing. In the presence of others with similar experiences, individuals felt safe to tell their story: stories of lives broken by the impact of sexual abuse and the residential school experience; stories of God's work of healing. It was an awesome sight to see men and women gather around these individuals and pray for them. One gentleman, who has shared his story at numerous healing conferences,

spoke up during the sharing circle to say that this was the best conference he had ever been to. Similar sentiments were expressed by others.

*Continued on page 2*

### Testimony

I am very thankful that I attended the Rising Above Conference in Saskatoon this past May. It helped me deal with an experience that I had kept a secret for seventeen years.

As a counsellor on a reserve, I help people deal with their abuse issues such as the residential school

trauma, sexual and/or physical abuse, emotional slavery, self hate, grief, separation, and family dysfunction. But I had an issue of my own that I had never dealt with.

For seventeen years I carried around a burden of something that

happened to me. I was sexually abused. This experience has always haunted me. I never

*“Rising Above helped me deal with an experience that I had kept a secret for seventeen years”*

wanted to talk about it on my own reserve

#### Inside this issue:

Message from the President	2
Meditation by Linda Martin	3
What's new with Rising Above	3
Resources	3
Upcoming Events	4

#### Special points of interest:

- Testimony by Joyce Roberts
- What's new with Rising Above
- Upcoming events

# Message from the President

A parable tells us about two frogs that fell into a large container of cream. They swam and swam to fight for their lives. One decided it was no use and gave up. The other, determined to survive, kept swimming and swimming until finally he climbed out of the container via the butter he had created. The moral of the story is, "don't give up, keep going, things can get better."

In 2 Corinthians 5:17 the Bible tells us that, "Those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun!" This verse affirms to us that **change** is possible.

From its beginning Rising Above has been instrumental in bringing **change** to many hurting people. **Change** is something we all desire. True, lasting **change** seems to elude many of us to the point of frustra-

tion and despair. We bring **good news** that **change** is attainable and worth striving for.

Arnold Mitchell, a social psychologist from Stanford says that three ingredients are necessary for **change** to occur: 1) **change** comes from dissatisfaction, 2) **change** takes energy, and 3) **change** requires insight.

We at Rising Above see that many are at the stage of dissatisfaction but remain there or are stuck there. We want to encourage people to put in the energy needed

*"We bring good news that change is attainable and worth striving for."*

for **change**. Keep battling, fighting, striving, don't quit or give up and keep swimming against the negative things of life.

We also want to encourage you to get insight into your struggles, hurt and pain. Study, learn, read and attend church conferences, etc. to gain understanding about the issues you face.

The Bible says that, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." You can do it, you can **change** and always remember that we are cheering for you!

Mervin Cheechoo is Cree from Moose Factory Ontario. After pasturing there for thirteen years he and his wife Carol Ann and three children moved to Sudbury, Ontario. Currently, he is assistant pastor of an First Nations church and has a passion for developing First Nations pastors and leaders.



## 2003 Annual Conference *Continued from page 1*

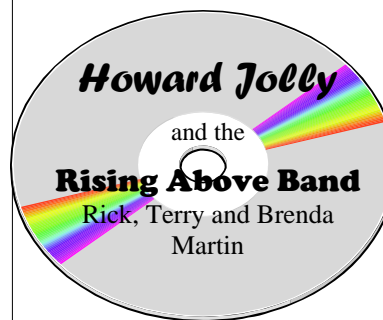
Rising Above would like to publicly thank the organizing committee and their volunteers for their part in making the 2003 conference a success. The committee members were Bonnie Gamble (chairperson), Joyce Munroe, Charlene Brass, Elizabeth Keo, Merna and Grand Severeight, and Helen Diebold.

Due to the growing interest in Rising Above in Saskatchewan and the great need for this ministry there, the Board decided to keep the annual conference in Saskatoon for another year.

## Music



They're first CD project!



Coming in spring of 2004

Howard, Rick, Brenda and Terry have been singing together for over a year at Rising Above conferences, churches and jamborees. Howard's powerful and passionate voice along with Rick and Brenda's soothing harmony ministers to the heart. The CD features a collection of gospel greats, worship songs and original recordings.

In order to help finance the project, they are offering it at a pre-release price of \$15. Fill out the response card on page 4, along with \$15 and you will receive your copy in the mail when it is released.

## Testimony

*Continued from page 1*

because I was afraid it would get out in the community. The thought of not knowing what people would think of me was always frightening.

When I was at the conference I felt safe and ready to deal with my abuse. The counsellors there really helped me

bring out this issue that I was struggling with and had buried all these years.

I still have my day to day struggles but I have the Lord beside me to lead and guide me through each day. Many thanks go out to the Rising Above

counsellors and facilitators for guiding me through this situation in my life.

Joyce Roberts

Joyce resides and works on the Roseau River Reserve in southern Manitoba as a wellness counsellor at the Ginew Wellness Centre.

# Where Is My Table?

by Linda Martin, Board Member

*“The LORD is my Shepherd, I shall not be in want. . . . You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. . . .” Psalm 23:1, 5 (NIV)*

A friend of mine, who is taking a Biblical Counseling training program, expressed her thoughts of the coming week. She was coming to the final week of intense training that was geared to challenge her on a personal and spiritual level. She likened the week to that of **the valley of the shadow of death**. I responded by saying that it sounded like a quote from Psalm 23. I reminded her that towards the end of that psalm the Psalmist declares that the Lord prepares a table before him in the presence of his enemies.

Many times in our lives circumstances give us the sense that we are walking through the valley of the shadow of death. Families are torn apart by unresolved tensions. Families are losing their children to untimely, tragic deaths. The

Psalmist reminds us that our God, the Good Shepherd, walks with us through these valley experiences in our lives.

According to some commentators, Psalm 23 is known as a Psalm of Confidence. The writer is expressing his trust and confidence in God as his protector. He goes on to say that God’s presence and protection is so sure that He has even *prepared a table before us in the presence of our enemies*. What table is this? Is it a table of celebration of God, for you, for me and for life? Is it a table meant to bring refreshment to our bodies and our spirits?

The table is a picture of God’s complete care and provision for us. It is an illustration of His complete control over our lives. He is unhampered by the circumstances that threaten to undo us.

The challenge then is to find this table that the Lord has prepared for us amidst life’s difficult circumstances. We

find it by coming to the Lord and trusting in Him that He is able and desires to take care of us. We too can then say with the Psalmist, “the Lord is my Shepherd.”

**Dear Father God, My prayer today is that you would help me find this table you have prepared for me. Help me to come so that I may be refreshed in my wearied body and spirit. Help me to come to this table to be reminded that life is worth celebrating because you are a God who is in control of all life’s circumstances. In Jesus Name I pray, Amen.**

Written by Linda Martin, Board Member.

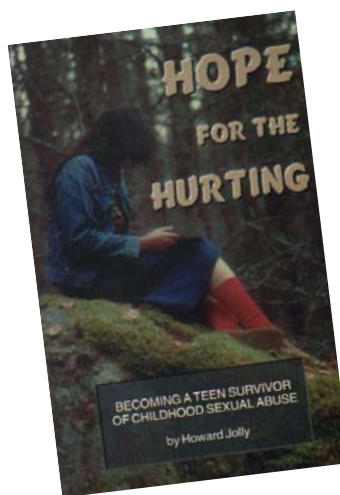


Linda is Oji-Cree from Muskrat Dam ON. Her and her husband Rick and their two girls live in Sioux Lookout, ON. They work for My People International in a counseling and teaching ministry to First Nations People.

## What’s New With Rising Above?

- In February 2003, the Board welcomed Terry Martin as administrator for Rising Above. Under the Board’s direction, he handles the finances, manages the office, conducts correspondence, coordinates events, writes documents and produces promotional material. Since it is not a paid position, Terry raises his own support. In recent years, Terry and his wife Brenda have been involved with the music ministry of Rising Above. They live in Niverville, Manitoba along with their three children, Shoshannah, Josiah and Nathaniel .
- A new office location. Along with handling the administration of the organization, Terry has set up an office in Niverville, Manitoba.
- Rising Above is now a registered charity! This charitable status allows us to issue receipts for income tax purposes to our donors. Along with this privilege it brings with it added financial accountability.
- After a year and a half sabbatical, Selma Poulin has re-joined the Board of Directors. We are very pleased to have her back on board.

## Resources



### HOPE for the HURTING

**Becoming a teen survivor of childhood sexual abuse**

By Howard Jolly

Sexual abuse has damaged many lives. Victims of sexual abuse are “the walking wounded.” Howard’s compassion for the wounded is very evident in his book. He points out the journey from being a victim of sexual

abuse to becoming a survivor with the ability to trust again, a desire to live again, and a love for others. His book is filled with a message of hope for becoming a survivor of sexual abuse.

To order a copy for yourself or for a friend, complete the order form on the next page.

## RISING ABOVE ABUSE COUNSELLING AGENCY

Box 930  
Niverville, MB R0A 1E0  
Phone: 204-388-5408  
Fax: 204-388-5365  
Email: info@risingabove.ca

### Members of the Board:

Mervin Cheechoo, President, Cree  
Gary Quequish, Vice President, Oji-Cree  
Howard Jolly, Cree  
Linda Martin, Oji-Cree  
Selma Poulin, Oji-Cree

We're on the Web! Visit us at:  
[WWW.risingabove.ca](http://WWW.risingabove.ca)

## Rising Above is...

- Initiated and governed by First Nations people;
- Annual and regional conferences dealing with abuse issues in the Aboriginal community. Conferences are located in cities and communities across Canada and United States;
- Committed to training First Nations people to be effective care-givers.

## A Brief History...

As a result of repeatedly hearing people's stories of abuse and recognizing the deep negative impact abuse has had on their culture, a group of First Nations men and women were convinced they had to do something. A board of directors was formed in 1992 and that fall they organized a conference to help restore hope to those who had been abused. As a result, Rising Above was born. The board of directors chose the name Rising Above because they believed that with God's help First Nations Peoples could rise above the hurt and pain caused by abuse and enjoy the abundant life God has planned for his people.

### MISSION STATEMENT

Our purpose is to bring awareness of the harmful effects of abuse issues among Aboriginal people by providing biblical teaching, counseling and resource tools to equip First Nations to bring God's healing to our land.

## Upcoming Events:

- February 22-25, 2004, Regional Conference, Anchorage, Alaska.
- May 26-30, 2004, Annual Conference, Ramada Inn, Saskatoon.

*He bore our griefs and carried  
our sorrows... and by His  
wounds we are healed.*

*Isaiah 53:3-4*

## I support the ministry of Rising Above!

- I will pray regularly for the ministry of Rising Above
- I have enclosed a cheque (payable to Rising Above). Please use it in the following way.

- General expenses \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- CD project expenses \$ \_\_\_\_\_

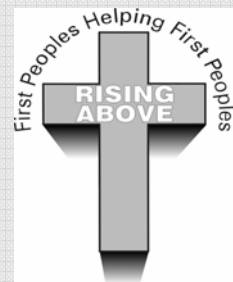
Wherever most needed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

- Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ copies of *HOPE FOR THE HURTING* @ 3.95 ea.  
\_\_\_\_\_ copies of the Rising Above Band CD @ \$15 ea.

I have enclosed a cheque (payable to Rising Above) for \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(prices include taxes, shipping and handling).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_



Publisher: Rising Above  
Abuse Counselling Agency

Managing Editor: Terry Martin

Printing: Countryside Printers

Soaring Eagle Tepachimowin is  
Rising Above's biannual newsletter.