

# Newsletter 22



*„Even though  
I am a free man  
with no master, I have  
become a slave to all  
people to bring many to  
Christ ... But I do not  
ignore the law of God; I  
obey the law of Christ.“*

*1. Corinthians 9, 19&21*

## *„Everything okay with you guys?“*

Was the concerned question of a friend's, calling us in the summer. And of course that question is justified. At this point Tal should have been in touch with you, but ... Here some words from Tal explaining what happened:

*Dear friends,*

*As time slips through our grasp, I have come to realize that good planning does not come easy. I do apologize for not getting this out to you all sooner. This year has not been the easiest for us.*

*With work and studies Tim Harris, Christina and myself, we had nearly an impossible time in which we could meet and plan a Germany trip with the kids of Penelakut Island Elementary School (PIES). We all were hit with people leaving their jobs and Tim filling the gaps, students struggling through difficult family situations and worse, we all had lost family, friends and loved ones to suicide. So it is with time and prayer that I have been able to resurface through life's turbulent waters. I do apologize for not getting word out sooner, as you may have been expecting a visit from us. I have now started to plan personal visits with you for this fall/winter.*

*We just have finished up the busy time of the year for programming and coordinating summer activities, interns and summer helpers. We have not changed much with archery and kayaking, but we do plan on having more presence on the Island and are praying for semi permanent lodging for ourselves in the form of a cabin, trailer or camper. Somewhere we can meet and talk to people in a more secure environment.*

*Our interns took care of some of the logistics with incoming short-term groups. We had two interns from Indiana who lived in the community with a host*

*family. It is our desire to meet the spiritual needs of the Penelakut community and beyond, please pray for us that we will be the salt and light that God needs us to be as we develop and work through our planning and handle the methods of introducing Jesus in his role as Saviour to the human race.*

Well, Tal said it himself: Organisation and the realization of plans is not one of his strong points. On the other hand he is definitely socially gifted. His ability to reach out to people, accept them, gain their trust, create a positive atmosphere etc. is amazing. And of course that is more important for our ministry. But it also means, that some plans are not being realized as quickly as we would like.

## *Changes*

Last month we found out that Tim Harris has resigned in order to become the principal of the new school on his home reserve. We now need to find out how open the new principal will be towards the R.O.O.T.S. involvement in the school. Tim himself is interested in us being involved in different capacities in his new school. We have to pray about it, as we are afraid that might take away from our work on Penelakut.

## *What is a missionary?*

As Tal already mentioned we had interns this year again, staying between 1 - 6 weeks on Penelakut. They all seem to agree: The greatest challenge is "Not to do, but to be!" Short-term mission trips are very popular, but increasingly

controversial, one of the main reasons being that they are often not only ineffective, but even contra productive. Usually the reasons are the differing expectations and cultural differences of the short-term missionaries and the hosts. Coming from a western/north-American culture we often measure success by what has been accomplished, that is why building projects and programs for children etc. are so popular. "We" want to control the situation and



therefore ignore (full of good intentions) the needs and expectations of those we came to reach out to. First Nations, as many cultures, put an emphasis on building relationships and friendships. Everything else is usually perceived as another form of colonialism. That's why Tal challenges the interns to come to the reservation as learners, to meet people consciously, to "endure" times of silence, seemingly not doing anything and to only become active when helping under the leadership of the Penelakut or when directly asked or been given permission (for example teaching a self defense course to girls and women). Coming from a western culture that is often hard: Not making any plans, if there are



plans, not to be surprised, if they come to nothing; to be willing to be corrected, even if the own way of doing things seems to be instinctively better and easier ... All this is not easy, but the success of this kind of sensibility shows itself in its fruits: "We

have often received rejection and hate from white people, but you have brought love and friendship." "When are you coming back?" "Daughter, we will miss you." "You are always

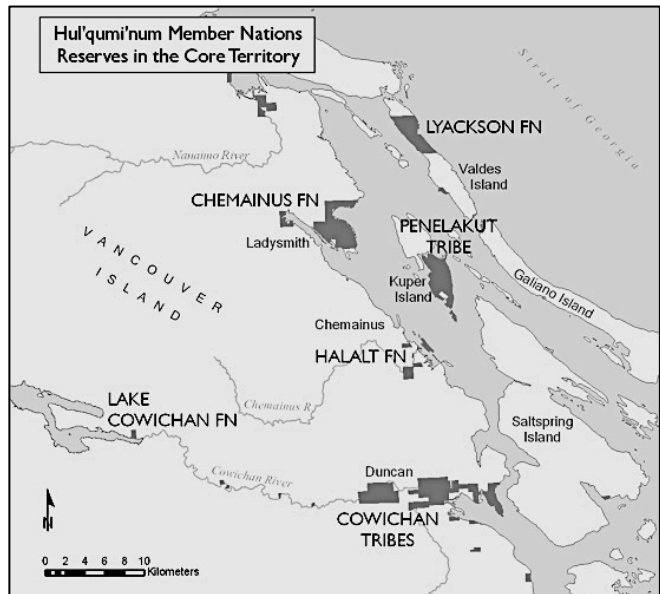
welcome here." "This song we last drummed at the funeral of our nephew. You have brought peace and comfort and we give you this song as a Thank-You." All these are extracts of speeches made at the goodbye-barbecue.



### *A cry for help*

Since the beginning of the year we have had an increase of suicides in Tal's Hul'qumi'num tribal area. Overall there were 9 successful suicides and over 60 attempt / threats. The Cowichan tribe had declared a local state of emergency. You can find out more at

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/story/2012/05/14/bc-first-nation-suicides.html>.



The Hul'qumi'num are the people of southeastern Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands and the lower Fraser River. They speak the same language and are closely related culturally and otherwise. They are made up of six First Nations: Cowichan, Chemainus, Penelakut, Lyackson, Halalt and Lake Cowichan. They number more than 6,200 people. [http://www.hulquminum.bc.ca/hulquminum\\_people](http://www.hulquminum.bc.ca/hulquminum_people)

These tragic deaths impact the whole community and beyond: Everybody knows everybody well, lives closely together and often

is more or less closely related. Tal has spent a lot of time with the bereaved, at funerals and in hospitals. And of course he himself is affected as well. Though none of the suicides was a close relative, he knows them or at least their relatives. Please pray for him, as it is sometimes not easy for him to deal with his own emotions while at the same time being a support to those that are affected the most. Added to that were several unexpected "natural" deaths.

### *„World Next Door“*

Beginning of the year we had a special guest: Barry Rodriguez from "World Next Door" spent a month with Tal, Tim and with Penelakut. "World Next Door" sends journalists to Christian organisations and missionaries in different countries to become part of their work for a time and so be able to report first hand about global challenges of social injustice. Barry has written about his impressions from Penelakut <http://www.worldnextdoor.org/2012/04/bearing-fruit-penelakut-island-spring-2012/>, created a video with a class from Penelakut, etc. If you have been wishing for a website from us (I am working on it) you can gain a good impression about our work through the eyes of one not directly involved.

### *James' Family News*

Corbin and Connor have changed schools and are now at the local Christian School, the same one I used to work for as an Educational Assistant. Corbin had problems with being bullied at his old school last year and Connor's



best friend had switched to this school a year before. It was a hard decision, but so far it seems to have been the right one. The Penelakut Band will



probably cover the costs, which would be a great help. Corbin is now in Grade 7 (12 years going on 18 ...) and Connor in Grade 5 (10 years). What happened to the two cute little "angels" that lived with us just yesterday?



Since March we have a new "grandson" – Niklas, the first son of our nephew Chris and his wife Meagan. We are now 4 times grandparents – and that with only 45 years ☺.

I have finally received (conditional) my BC teaching certificate. The last year was very stressful with a long and intensive practicum, studies (Mathematics and Environmental Geology) and a 2-month subbing job. The summer was busy as well – we had people staying with us for almost the whole time and Tal constantly being on Penelakut. Now I have to complete three more courses and then I get my permanent teaching certificate. Right now I am taking First Nations Studies 101 and University English, work as a substitute and will start volunteering at a couple of (First Nation) band schools soon. Besides that I am helping Tal to prepare his trip and presentations for his Canada furlough.

### *Penelakut Fundraiser*

Middle of November it is time again for the annual "Snow camp", the Christian retreat for First Nation Teenagers from RedSoulRising /NAIM (<https://www.naim.ca/blog/snow-camp-2012>). Last year Tal and Tim took a couple of teenagers – they came back enthusiastic and this year a lot more teens want to go. Because of that adults and teens from Penelakut are organising a fundraiser (breakfast sale), so they can afford to go. Tal will be the main speaker this year, the focus is "Fear: How we can face the fear(s) that holds us back from becoming who the Creator meant us to be", based on 1.John 4,18. We are very encouraged that this fundraiser has not been organised by us, but the tribe: The openness

towards hearing the message of Jesus is growing.

### *R.O.O.T.S. Website*

I finally started working on our website. This is the last Newsletter that will go out by email or snail mail. In the future you will receive a short notice by email that an update has been posted and you can then find it on our website. This way we can blog, publish pictures and videos etc. You find the new website under:

[roots4naim.weebly.com](http://roots4naim.weebly.com)

The password for the website is: **TEAM**

We chose to password protect some pages in order to respect the privacy of all involved, even though all featured have signed a photo release form.

### *Furlough Dates*

Hardly anything is set in stone yet, so we will let you know when Tal will be in your area exactly (either calling you, sending you an email, or you can check updates on our website).

### **Vancouver Island**

October 7, 2012 to October 12, 2012

- **NANAIMO Christ Community Church,**  
7:00 pm October 13, 2012
- **THETIS ISLAND, TI Community Church**  
10:00 am October 14, 2012

### **BC**

October 15, 2012 to October 24, 2012

(Staff Conference

October 25, 2012 to October 30, 2012)

### **BC**

October 31, 2012 to November 9, 2012

(Snow camp Youth Retreat

November 16, 2012 to November 18, 2012)

### **Alberta**

November 19, 2012 to November 28, 2012

### **Saskatchewan**

November 29, 2012 to December 11, 2012

### **Vancouver Island**

December 12, 2012 to December 17, 2012

### **Manitoba**

January 10, 2013 to January ?, 2013

We would greatly appreciate it if you would contact us and arrange to meet with Tal. If you can host a meeting, even better. Maybe you have friends or family that are interested in First Nations Ministry and would like to learn more. You have been exceptionally devoted in your

support and we are so thankful to know that we have such a steadfast team to rely on. Inviting people to join the team is a very practical way you can get involved in the ministry – something we cannot do. The ministry is hard hit by the strong Canadian dollar as a large part of our support comes from Germany and some from the US. The exchange rate has caused our support to now be at only 80% and we will lose another \$500.00/month starting January as very faithful supporters are pursuing ministry themselves.

### *Thankfulness*

We just celebrated Thanksgiving, the perfect time to stop for a moment in our busy lives and to reflect on the blessings God has given us and to remember to not take them for granted.



*May Jesus bless you as richly as He has blessed us when He chose you to be our team, sharing your lives with the First Nations Peoples He and we love so much. Words do not express the thankfulness we feel towards you and your loyalty.*

*Tal and Christina  
with Corbin and Connor*

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