

## **Cameron Asman – e3 Ministries**

Dear Friends and Family,

I am excited to share with you a few of the experiences and opportunities that I have had since my last newsletter in September. Much has happened in my life since my last newsletter. One very exciting event that has taken place was that I proposed to my now fiancé Sheldyn Echte near the end of September and we are planning to get married next fall. I have also been actively involved in many different communities in the past few months and have learned many new things that I hope will bleed into what I share with you.

### **Soaring With the Eagles: Kenora, Rat Portage First Nation, North West Angle 37 & 33 First Nations, White Fish Bay First Nation, Shoal Lake 39 First Nation**

I have never seen eagles as close as I did in the city of Kenora. An eagle soared twenty feet above us as we talked to some people on the streets. A common theme that we saw throughout our five day trip throughout the Kenora area was the powerful presence of eagles soaring and perching near us. We sat around a round table with some leaders that we met in our previous trip in August. We discussed about gatherings that we would like to work together to create among reserves in the area as well as in Kenora. As we shared our visions together of what it may look like our conversation ended with three eagles swooping across the windows that we sat by. The one leader that we sat with calmly said, “that is a good sign.”

For the five days that we travelled from reserve to reserve we came into contact with many eagles everywhere we went. At first it seemed like a coincidence but as the appearances of the eagles continued to happen time and time again at just the right moments the idea of coincidence began to fade. In a way the eagles spoke to us and the people that we listened to and prayed with. In Northwest Angle 37 First Nations we went to see an elder that we met from the round house experience from my last newsletter. The elder welcomed us into her home with great hospitality and a delicious meal. As we went outside we noticed five eagles up in the trees across the street. I was fascinated by them and of course wanted to take a closer look. I then went and knocked on the door of the people who lived across the way to see if we could look at the eagles a little closer. As I asked the woman who came to the door I quickly found out that she was the daughter of the elder that we came to visit. We then invited her to join us to go view the beautiful eagles up in the tree. As she stared into her backyard she mentioned that she had never seen so many eagles in her reserve before. As we followed the woman down a path in her backyard we came down to the waters of Regina Bay where we quickly found out that there were not only five eagles but in fact there were twelve eagles surrounding a massive muskie on the shore. It was the first time in my life that I could say that I saw a “flock” of eagles. As many of the eagles flew away as we entered the bay the woman shared with us that this was unheard of in her reserve. This event powerfully spoke to her and the rest of her family that we would soon meet that afternoon.

The eagle in many of the Indigenous cultures that we come in contact with represents love and is the creature that lives closest to the Creator in many teachings. The eagle is the great messenger who soars across the skies to bring hope and love to the rest of the Creator's creation. As I reflected on the various experiences that we had with eagles on the trip I could only see God at work. I see these events that we had as God working with us to bring hope and love to the people that he guided us to. God was the great missionary that went before us. As we soared with the eagles we too took part as messengers for the one who created us. In many ways I am grateful for those eagles because in the moments they appeared they powerfully affirmed what we were doing and assured the people that we met that we came with a message of love.

### **The Naming Ceremony**

Almost every week I have been meeting with an Elder who has been teaching me cultural practices, teachings and ceremonies that I have greatly benefited from. Near the end of September I was greatly honoured to be a part of a Naming Ceremony with some elders that I call friends. To be given a spirit name (or “cultural name” or “Indian name” as I have heard from various people) is an amazing privilege and the name given to me will continue to be a name that I will share as I go forward to the many communities that I will be visiting.

The spirit name given to me was White Buffalo.

When I share this name one of the first things that people wonder is if I have been given a name with “white” in it because I am a white person, the answer to this question is no but it is curious. The elders that gave me my name had been praying and contemplating what name would best suit me for several months. As we sat around their living room together they began to share with me the name and its significance that it held and I am still learning of its significance today. I was told that as I meet more and more people within Indigenous cultures that I would very soon learn that it is a powerful name.

The significance of a spirit name is that it represents specific inner traits about a person that an elder sees within you. Our names that we are given at birth are names that usually come from our parents finding a certain beauty or significance within the name that they have chosen or they have chosen a name that passes on a family member's name. Our birth names are usually names we have been given before knowing who we have grown into. A spirit name is given in reflection to the characteristics that God has guided us and nurtured us into, similar to the changing of names found within the New and Old Testament (though I will continue to go by Cameron Asman). As I learn more about the colours of the medicine wheel and the symbolism of the buffalo I will begin to see more of the meanings that are held behind the name “White Buffalo,” however, that is a journey all on its own.

### **Roseau River and Roseau Rapids First Nation**

Every Tuesday I as well as many other leaders have been travelling to Roseau River and Roseau Rapids First Nations. On paper both of these reserves would be considered the same reserve but in reality they are far apart not only by the distance of a half and hour drive but also by divisions within the community. Throughout the months we have visited many different different people and with our surprise have been accepted by many people who are apart of the Midewiwin Society (Grand Medicine Society). People who are apart of the Midewiwin Society from whom we have encountered are great leaders who firmly hold and protect their traditional and cultural ways. We have had many great conversations with the Midewiwins and have had many opportunities to share the Gospel and come to greater understanding of each other. From what has tragically occurred throughout Canada continues to hold in the memories of many of these leaders today and because of those memories trust is not always the first thing that we experience (which is something we understand). As we continue to listen, share and love our relationships and trust with many of the people we have met in Roseau River and Rapids First Nations have grown.

We are also slowly beginning to gather with many people in Roseau but it has not been easy to start. What we have seen occurring every single week that we have gone is death after death and sickness after sickness. Please pray for the people of Roseau River and Roseau Rapids as there are so many troubling events that occur each week within the small community of 500 or so people. Please pray for the leaders that are rising up within the community and that they continue to strive to build their relationships with God. Please pray that as the community gathers and grows and that we come to see new visions and opportunities of how we may work together to holistically care for the community.

### **Pukatawagan First Nation**

As we sat in the slow moving train heading towards Pukatawagan we could feel the heaviness in the air, the darkness that loomed. Pukatawagan is not quite like any of the other reserves that I have visited in the past year, it is a place that has much darkness but just that much more room to bring hope. There is a desensitization in the culture of Puk, stabbings, drugs, gangs and violence are common and fear is all but too expected. A new gang named the Savag3s has plastered their graffiti all over and stories of their violence is regular. People do not go out at night (but of course we couldn't help ourselves) in fear of being attacked. Stories of the difficulty of living in Puk is not a secret when listening to the people's stories but as the trip went on we saw the many flickers of light that carry on through the reserve. I had the great opportunity of being asked by an elder to take part in a square dancing competition. It was my first time square dancing but I guarantee you it will not be my last after how much fun was involved. Team after team battled it out in the community and the team I was apart of came in fourth place. It was an amazing time to get to know so many people in the community and I hope that when I return that there will be another opportunity to dance. We also did an interactive presentation with teenagers at the high school on the history of Canada through the eyes of the Indigenous people called the blanket exercise. We were expecting 40 teenagers but to our surprise we ended up with 120 teenagers to present to.

The biggest highlight of the trip was being part of starting a new church. For awhile our group has been going to Pukatawagan and seeing people come to know Christ but none of them had been gathering together. We had the opportunity to gather with them four times throughout the trip and what we experienced was encouraging. The new church in Pukatawagan was and is hungry to learn more about Jesus, so hungry that their questions were endless and our evening stretched to times where we lost track. The trip turned into a time to listen to God for visions and dreams of what he wants to do in Puk, a time to encourage a new church to continue on despite the great hardships that they face, and a time to learn and grow together. We left with a great hope that God's spirit was moving among the people there and we cannot wait to see what is next to happen in Pukatawagan. Please Pray for the new church in Pukatwagan as they face many difficulties as a group and individually.

There is so many other things to share about Living Word Temple, Turtle Island Community Church and Albright Church but I will write about them in the future. I will also soon be starting a Facebook page where I can more easily send updates and prayer requests so stay tuned.

If you have any curiosities or questions about the missions that I am doing please contact me in anyway that you like, I would love to hear from you! I hope that everyone has a wonderful Christmas season and find many great moments to spend with family, friends and remembering God's great gift to us.

### **My Contact Information**

If you have any questions at all, please contact me.

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Thank you everyone so much for the amazing support and prayer it means so much,

Cameron Asman