

Facing the Frontlines

Featuring: Cheryl Bear

Throughout Atlantic Baptist Women's partnership with Canadian Baptist Ministries (CBM), readers of *Tidings Magazine* have had the privilege of praying for CBM staff who are serving the needs of communities across the globe. With many of "Facing the Frontlines" articles featuring CBM global field staff, sometimes the stories of those whom we are praying for seem far away and maybe even disconnected from our own lives. This month I want to tell you about much-needed ministry happening in Canada, our own backyard.

Cheryl Bear has been a familiar face to Atlantic Baptist Women through the CBM campaign, *She Matters*, where Cheryl was the spokesperson for raising awareness about gender inequality and gender-based violence in Canada. These issues are especially prominent in Canadian Indigenous communities. As a member of the Bear Clan of the Nadleh Whut'en First Nation in British Columbia, Cheryl has a unique and powerful voice in bridging conversations between First Nations communities and Canadian Baptist churches. After the *She Matters* campaign, Cheryl started her role with CBM as a strategic associate and Indigenous relations specialist.

Over the course of her career, Cheryl has travelled all across Canada using her gifts in speaking as well as her talents with singing and songwriting. Cheryl has spoken with over 600 Indigenous communities across Canada and the United States, and many public schools, churches, businesses, and government-run events. During her speaking engagements, Cheryl shares stories of her people, sings, and holds workshops where she teaches attendees about modern Indigenous issues in Canada. The message that she teaches is applicable to all Canadians, and her use of story and song provide non-Indigenous audiences with a taste of the rich Indigenous culture.

Cheryl's work with CBM as a strategic associate allows her to be a voice of experience and wisdom between Canadian Baptist churches and Indigenous communities. Cheryl is able to help churches build relationships, navigate cultural differences, communicate effectively, and celebrate hope and healing with Indigenous people groups. She is also a founding board member for NAIITS, the North American Indigenous Institute of Theological Studies, which is an educational organization for Indigenous students. In addition, Cheryl has

a doctorate as well as a master of divinity degree.

As you can see, Cheryl has a lot on her plate! Here are some ways you can be praying for her.

Praise:

- The positive impact of Cheryl's work on building relationship between Indigenous people and Canadian Baptist churches.
- The many opportunities that Cheryl has to share her gifts and wisdom with hundreds of people across Canada.

Prayer:

- Pray that stigma and stereotypes against Indigenous people will be broken down so that their voices are heard and valued across Canada.
- Pray for energy, peace, joy, and endurance for Cheryl as she serves in her various roles.
- Pray that God will be glorified in all interactions between Indigenous people and Canadian Baptist churches.

Romans 10:12–15

by Krista Raynard

Sources: cbmin.org, www.cherylbear.com,
www.facebook.com, www.wikipedia.org.

