

MUDDY WATERS

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An Insider's View
of North American Native Spirituality

A black and white photograph of a teepee in a field with trees in the background. The teepee is on the left side of the frame, and the background is filled with dense trees. The foreground is a grassy field.

NANCI DES GERLAISE

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Muddy Waters

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Scripture quotations are taken from the *King James Version*.

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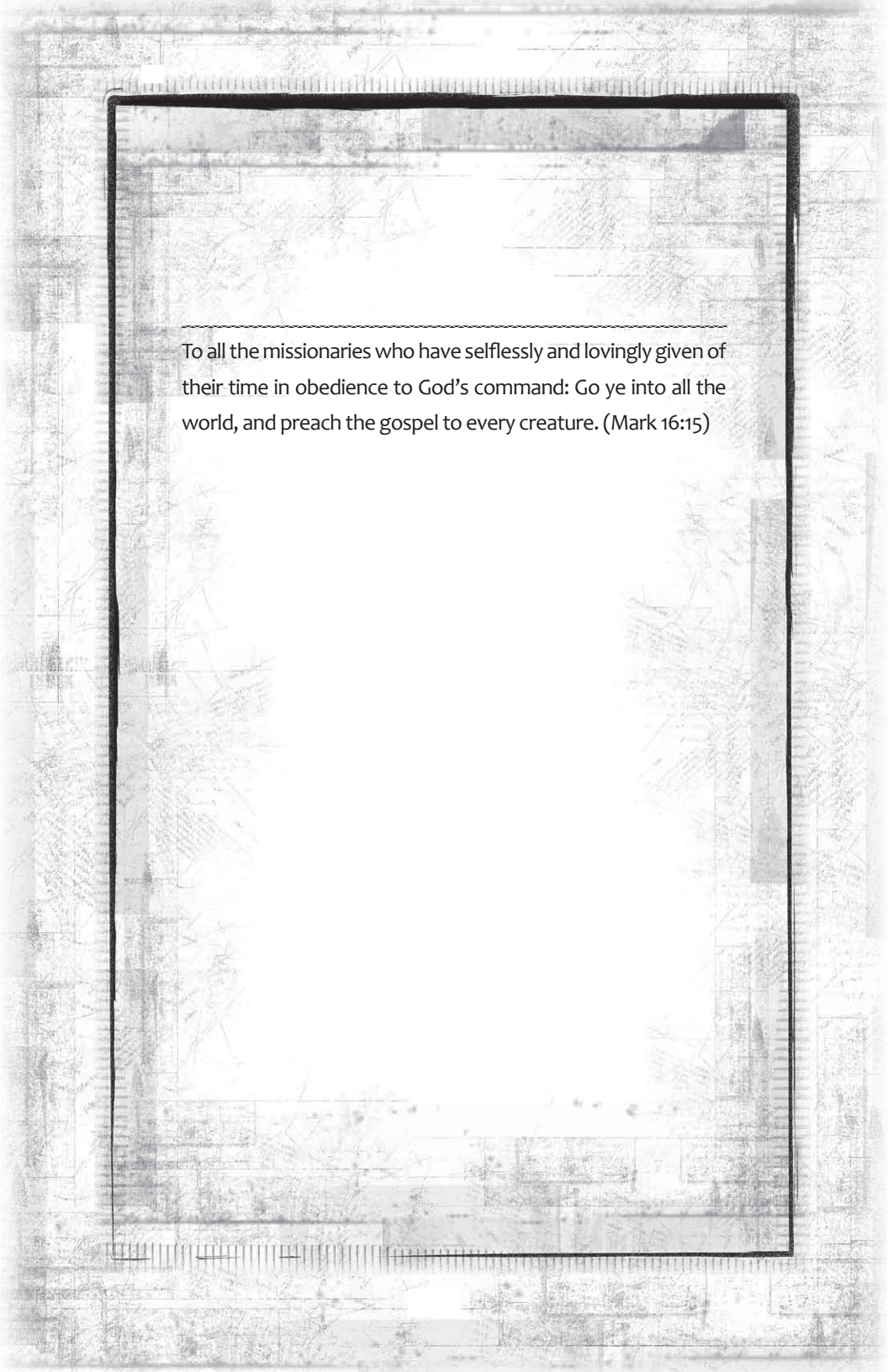
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NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

As we began preparing this book for publication, we realized the sensitive nature of publishing a book like this. First, we ourselves are not Native American or First Nations, so some may ask, what gives us the right to publish a book about Native Spirituality? As white Americans and born-again Christians, we are very aware of and absolutely against the prejudices and the injustices that the U.S. Native American and Canadian First Nations people have experienced. While reading this new edition of *Muddy Waters*, we learned of the residential schools in Canada and the boarding schools in the U.S. We were appalled to learn how the young Native children were taken from their parents' homes then placed in these schools and subjected to physical, sexual, and/or mental abuse.

When we traveled across Montana and Alberta in 1997, it was the first time we had seen any of the reservations. From what we saw, it was obvious the Native people had been short-changed in the land they were given by the U.S. and Canadian governments. It became clear to us the reservations weren't faring too well. We later learned of the high suicide, alcoholism, drug, and other abuse rates found on the reservations. Our hearts went out to the Native American people whom we saw as the forgotten people of North America. Yet, we didn't know how we could possibly help. Little did we know back in 1997 that we would start a Christian publishing house in 2002; little did we know that we would later publish our chief editor David Dombrowski's favorite book (next to the Bible)—Egerton Ryerson Young's book from the late 1800s, *Stories From Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires*; and little did we know that we would stumble across Nanci Des Gerlaise.

We offer this book with the utmost humility and gratefulness to the Lord for giving us the opportunity to publish a book by a Cree First Nations Canadian woman. We pray the message in this book will be received by both Native and non-Native people and that it will cause many to be set free by the only One who can set man free.



To all the missionaries who have selflessly and lovingly given of their time in obedience to God's command: Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. (Mark 16:15)



A Cree Camp in 1871 in Alberta, Canada

PREFACE

I wrote and self-published the first edition of *Muddy Waters* in 2008. When Lighthouse Trails Publishing came across the book and read it in 2011, they approached me, asking if they could publish a new expanded 2nd edition. I saw this as an open door to reach even more people with the message in this book.

The original edition of *Muddy Waters* is about one-third the size of this new edition. What is different? First, I have added four biographical chapters. I also added two chapters regarding how Native Spirituality and some current trends (such as the Indigenous People's Movement and the Emergent Church) coincide with one another. All in all, this edition has six new chapters, two new appendixes, and a name and topic index.

Many Christians see no problem combining the beliefs and practices of Native American Spirituality with their view of Christianity. This book was written to assist such believers who do not understand the subtle snares of the devil and Christ's call to complete holiness and truth. Like them, I ignorantly engaged in Native Spirituality without prior assessment of the spiritual consequences of this false worship.

Yet, this book is also written for non-believers who are struggling with many problems, such as family, substance abuse, health problems, and the darkness and evil of this world. Do you have peace about your spirituality and your spiritual heritage? Does it fill the emptiness in your heart? What is your assurance based on? Do you know where you will go when you die? Are you certain you can stand before divine judgment?

Perhaps like me, you too have encountered problems with your background of North American Native Spirituality. You've lived some or all of a mixture of Native spiritism, Roman Catholicism, paganism, and Christianity all of your life. Perhaps you haven't questioned it before now, yet something about it has been disturbing you.

This book offers you the good news that liberty is available for you through the risen Lord Jesus Christ. Do not be afraid, there is hope! A hope found only in Jesus Christ. It is He who freed me from Satan's prison—He can do the same for you. The choice is yours.

This book is for those who may be suffering, as I once did, from the results of involvement in demonic activities, without understanding what they are. Maybe you have been struggling for years. You know something is very wrong.

There is an answer.

Read on.

Author's Note: My own name, the names of living family members and relatives, and the names of some places have been changed to fictitious ones to protect my own privacy and the privacy of my family.