

EDITORIAL COMMENT



Learning From Our Mistakes

Rick Wood, Editor, *Mission Frontiers*

What happens when missionaries teach that the only way of salvation is for a people to completely reject their own culture and accept the “Christian” culture of the missionary? What is the result of not understanding God’s love for all peoples and His plan for every tribe and tongue to worship and glorify God in all of their uniqueness? One answer is the disastrous history of the Native peoples of North America.

It is not possible to fully grasp the brutality and savagery inflicted upon Native Americans by the European immigrants to North America. Ranging from callous disregard to outright genocide, the history of Native Americans is a dark tale of racial/cultural hatred, betrayal and murder.

It is also not possible for non-Natives to fully understand the deep pain, trauma and alienation with which Native Americans can still suffer because of this history and the rejection of them and their culture by the very people who should have been their greatest defenders—the Church. Instead of standing with Native Americans in defending their God-given privilege to worship Jesus using their own cultural forms, the Church became an unofficial partner with political forces in the destruction of their cultures and communities.

The now-infamous Indian boarding schools, where every vestige of Native culture was replaced by a foreign culture, provide examples of this deliberate cultural destruction perpetrated by the Church. This has resulted in many of the social ills seen on Native reservations today. Their cultural dignity and self-respect as a people have been taken from them, with predictable results. Is it any surprise that the great majority of Native

Americans want nothing to do with the Church and “the white man’s religion?”

Unless the Church learns from the mistakes that were made with Native Americans, we will continue to repeat these mistakes around the world with potentially similar, tragic results.

The idea that a people must reject their own culture and join another’s in order to fully obey and follow Jesus is one of the most foundational errors in mission strategy, and it is still going on today. Some still promote the belief that Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists must reject all of their culture and join “ours” if they are to be true followers of Jesus.

At issue is the fundamental failure of the Church and some missionaries to separate their own culture from the gospel. This is not just a problem for people in the West. All cultures and peoples are prone to think that their culture’s expression of the gospel is the correct one and should be the model for followers of Jesus all over the world. As various cultures get involved in missions, they must recognize this tendency and train their people to understand and avoid it. We must recognize that God’s plan for history is that every tribe and tongue will worship Jesus out of their own cultural uniqueness, not by means of their conformity to some outside cultural standard.

Missionaries Using Bad Missiology

One of the earliest missionaries to Native Americans, John Eliot, made this same mistake when he started his work in 1644 among the Algonquin people. He did many things right by learning the language, translating Scripture and advocating on their behalf before the government. But he failed to respect

the value of the Algonquin culture and how God could use it to glorify Himself. He believed, like some missionaries today, that his own culture was the standard to follow.

He turned them into good “Christian” colonial citizens who helped save the Massachusetts Bay Colony from utter destruction. When other “Indians” nearly wiped out the white settlers, Eliot’s converts were the ones who helped tip the balance in the colonists’ favor. The “Praying Indians,” as they were called, were rewarded by having their towns burned and hundreds rounded up and imprisoned on a barren island in Boston Harbor. Eliot pleaded on their behalf, but to no avail. In the end, little fruit remained from his decades of work.

This was to be a repeating pattern in which sincere missionaries had their work destroyed by settlers looking only for prosperity on “Indian” land and a government that would not defend Native interests. The European settlers had no missionary vision for reaching the “Indians” in their midst. Instead of seeing the Natives as people needing to know Jesus, they saw them only as an obstacle to be overcome on the way towards wealth. How is the mission of the Church today harmed by people looking only for the good life here and caring not for the expansion of God’s Kingdom in all the earth?

Making the Gospel Indigenous

Can we pick up the broken pieces of this wreckage and begin to see people movements to Christ among Native Americans? That is what this issue is all about. It is about those courageous cultural pioneers who are applying sound missionary strategies and contextualizing the gospel for Native Americans—something

that should have been standard procedure from the beginning. Richard Twiss and others are leading a contextual revolution in ministry to Native Americans. See the articles starting on page 6.

Contextualization is the biblical approach used throughout the New Testament to communicate the gospel. It has been used by missionaries all over the world with great success, but it has been largely ignored by those ministering to Native Americans. The majority of Native American pastors and church leaders still hold to the missionary-imposed belief that there is nothing of value in their Native heritage and culture. This is beginning to change, and we chronicle some of these efforts in this issue. Contextualization is the process by which familiar cultural forms are adapted, redeemed and given new meaning in order to communicate the truths of Scripture to people on a deep heart-felt level. Cultural pioneers like Richard Twiss are making headway toward the goal of making the gospel “indigenous” to the Native American peoples.

The word “indigenous” means “normal or naturally existing.” Indigenization is a process that must take place in every people group on earth if the gospel is to flow naturally within each people so that each person may have access to faith in Christ. The gospel must look normal and natural to the people within a culture if it is to be accepted and spread as the Spirit leads. It cannot look like a foreign import, especially one that is imposed on a people by force. What looks foreign is generally rejected by the majority of people within a culture.

Overcoming Syncretism by Contextualization

Syncretism is the most commonly expressed concern whenever we talk about contextualization. Syncretism has occurred throughout Church history and will continue to be present until Jesus returns. This is because syncretism, at its essence, is double-mindedness in which something other than Jesus and biblical authority has ownership of a person's heart. What has a person's heart? Is it

Jesus and the truths of Scripture alone, or is it something else with Christian duties and practices just laying on the surface? We like to look at the cultural expressions that people use, which are different from our own, and make judgments regarding their relationship with Christ. The reality is, however, that contextualization is the means by which you *avoid* syncretism, not *create* it, as long as the Scriptures are the foundation for all practices.

The vital thing is to communicate the gospel to people in ways that are meaningful to them so that Scriptural truth can change their lives. When foreign forms and practices are forced on people, you are likely to get syncretism because the foreign forms often have very little meaning to them, and they end up just “going through the motions.”

The gospel travels on the road of love and respect for the people and their culture. If we are to avoid the mistakes made with Native Americans and make Jesus known to every tribe and tongue, we must contextualize the gospel and make it indigenous to every people. 🌐



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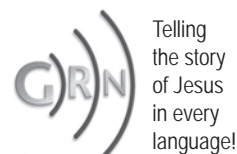
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MAKING JESUS KNOWN IN KNOWABLE WAYS

Richard Twiss, Sicangu Lakota

“I was made to burn and destroy all my tribal carvings, eagle feathers, and my dance outfit because the pastor told me now that I was a Christian, old things passed away and all things became new, which meant all my Native cultural ways needed to be replaced with Euro-American cultural ways. Then I was told I could no longer participate in our Native gatherings, dances or ceremonies because they were of the devil and full of idolatry. They even told me my Native drum was an idol and full of spirits, so I burned it and learned the guitar instead. Now I am no longer a Native in my culture. I am an anglicized Christian in American culture. The Bible has been used to colonize my soul.”

This pattern of recognition belongs to the conglomeration of Euro-American scholars, ministers and lay folk who have, over the centuries, used their economic, academic, religious and political dominance to create the illusion that the Bible, read through their experience, is the Bible read correctly.¹

I have heard versions of the above story dozens of times from Native people across North America, and it breaks my heart every time. This rejectionist and culturally demonizing approach remains the primary missionary paradigm among our Native people today and it is rooted in the very beginning of Christian mission in North America.

Every July since 2006, I have asked seminary students and participants in our annual cross-cultural immersion course on the Rosebud Sioux Reservation in South Dakota (population 13,000) to, in pairs, attend the Sunday service of one of the 26 churches on the reservation. Their assignment is to observe the sights, sounds, art, music, language, symbols, liturgy, roles, ritual and structures, then later report to the group

what they experienced. We have now been to more than half of those churches, and with one exception all of the course participants have said they could have been sitting in any suburban white church in America. Nearly everything about the service, music, language and church culture was completely Anglo, even though most of congregants were Native. Only two of the 15 churches attended had Native pastors.

Some of these churches have been on the Rosebud Reservation for 75 years, and the majority of them still teach against various aspects of Lakota culture and ceremony as demonic. Chuck Kraft has noted that the longer a people utilizes a majority of foreign forms, the longer Christianity is understood to be and experienced as a foreign religion—the white man’s religion—not an indigenous faith.² This kind of Christian mission is not a recent phenomenon, but is a continuation of the colonial missionary endeavor established at the very beginning of American missions history.

Eighteenth-century missionary John Sergeant, while pastoring a Christian Native community, “emphasized to his converts their cultural inadequacy and their personal responsibility for overcoming that inadequacy...Only through a complete sense of their own inadequacy can Natives be properly Christianized (Wyss 1998, p. 94). He felt they could not fulfill this mandate and began a school to assist them toward Christianity with the goal of “total eradication of all that marks them as Native...to root out their vicious habits, and to change their whole way of living” (Wyss 1998, p. 92). Rest assured that I am not using Sergeant as an “extreme example” to make a point because this mindset is common today throughout missions among Native North American communities.

African scholar Ngugi Wa Thiong’o, in *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*, describes how colonialism is fundamentally an attack on the soil and soul of a people that seeks total control of their culture.

Thiong’o says that the biggest weapon wielded and actually daily unleashed by imperialism is the

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cultural bomb. Furthermore, the effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves... to deconstruct the people's sense of self (how people perceive themselves and their relationship to the world). It's the destruction or the deliberate undervaluing of a people's culture, art, dances, religions, history, geography, education, orature and literature, and the conscious elevation of the language of the colonizer (2009, 3, p. 16).

The intentions described by John Sergeant and Thiong'o are the same: to eradicate Native cultural ways! In America it led to the forging of an uneasy alliance between church and state. Decisions by Christian missionary organizations about how to evangelize Native people in the name of God and the Bible and federal government, in light of American expansionist policies, served to unleash the "cultural bomb" with the same devastating and destructive results.

While the colonial missions paradigm still exists, it is waning around the world as indigenous theologians, scholars, pastors and missiologists begin interpreting Scripture for their own local contexts, opposing the pressure to reject their cultural ways, and instead embrace their histories and cultures. No longer

who-was-always-there," continues to make Jesus known in new and dynamic ways as we resolve to work toward a post-colonial Christendom for future generations.



Native veteran warriors honor the land.

What began nearly 20 years ago with a handful of Native followers of Jesus looking for better, more contextually appropriate ways of telling the gospel story has become an ever-growing national and international community of like-minded people. Since 2007 I have researched and written about this growing movement, having interviewed and surveyed 230 Native believers across North America. This article consists of excerpts from my doctoral dissertation for the E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission at Asbury Theological Seminary, titled, "Native-led Contextualization Efforts in North American, 1989–2009." It is based on my past 20 years of observation and active participation in Christian missions among First Nations people.

The stories by Cheryl, Terry, Bill, Casey and Fern in this issue of *Mission Frontiers* represent the experiences of many hundreds of other Native believers in the USA and in other countries! While 20 years ago these stories may have been dismissed as a kind of "radical minority," in the next 20 years they will become the norm in Native/indigenous ministry as we move into the era of



Using the Pipe in Prayer and Worship to Jesus"

wondering if God was involved in their histories and asking "if" God can be found in their cultural ways, they are assuming God was always involved and are discovering ways to worship within their cultural ways. The Creator of heaven and earth, "the God-

"post-colonial Christianity." These leaders are part of a new generation of Native/indigenous "progressive evangelicals" who are exploring other possibilities—"innovations" as they seek to contextualize the

gospel in their unique local cultural contexts.

Using Everett Rogers' model of the diffusion of innovations, I identified the innovators and their innovations, opponents/critics, early and late adopters and opinion leaders, and traced the development of the networks and communication channels that spread the new ideas. Here are some important landmarks of this new movement of the gospel.

In 1996, fifty-two North American Native leaders attended the inaugural World Christian Gathering of Indigenous People (WCGIP) hosted by the Maori people in New Zealand. More than 2,000 people from 32 countries attended. For eight days tribal people worshipped Jesus using their indigenous music, dance, clothing, ceremony, ritual, languages and stories as cultural expressions of their biblical faith. Six more Gatherings were convened around the world, with the 2011 Gathering scheduled again for New Zealand (www.wcgipnz.org). In 1998 leaders from North America hosted the Gathering in Rapid City, South Dakota. This served as a major catalytic gathering for Native leaders exploring these new possibilities, with many meeting for the first time in Rapid City.

On the heels of the WCGIP in Rapid City, Wiconi International convened 20 "Many Nations, One Voice" celebrations in 18 cities across North America from 1999 to 2005, which served as significant catalytic events to introduce and promote these new ideas. Each event concluded with Native believers wearing their traditional regalia and dancing and worshipping to the sound of the blending of tribal drums and western-style worship music. For the majority it was the first time they understood this was possible, and it set them free to be Native again and worship in their cultural ways. Thousands of people attended these



Richard Twiss (right) takes his vision to South Africa with R.J. Nomee, (left) Kalispel Tribal member from Usk, WA and a local tribal member (center)

events across the United States and Canada, many of whom then went home and began their own contextualization efforts in their local contexts.

Some Native published authors in the contextual network who are educating people biblically, missiologically and culturally about contextual ministry approaches—Randy Woodley, Adrian Jacobs, Suuqiina, myself, Anita Keith, Robert Francis and Phil Duran—collectively have circulated more than 60,000 copies of their books. Native recording artists in the network—Jonathan Maracle/Broken Walls, Bill Miller, Cheryl Bear, Jan Michael Looking-Wolf, Robert Soto, Mike Jacobs, and Terry and Darlene Wildman/Rainsong—collectively have circulated more than 350,000 copies of recordings that have migrated around the world and musically promoted contextual theology.

During the past 15 years several inter-tribal powwows have been organized by First Nations Christ-followers, with the expressed aim to bring together biblical faith and Native tradition. Randy and Edith Woodley in Anadarko, OK, Rosalyn Alemany (Dakota), and Ric Ross and Bryan Brightcloud (Chiricauilla Apache) started the annual Pasadena Powwow in Pasadena, California in 1999. Peter and Marcia Mason, "missionaries" from Australia, organized and hosted the Sacred Gathering Powwow in Colorado Springs in 2002 and held three more in the



Wiconi International's "Dancing Our Prayers" Team in Cusco, Peru. Our teams have presented Jesus in 11 countries around the world, including China, Pakistan and Germany, where thousands of people have embraced the gospel of Jesus.

ensuing years. Marshall “Tall Eagle” Serna and his Native church gathering hosted a “Christ-centered powwow” in 2007 in Salem, Oregon. Pastor Robert Soto (Lipan Apache) has hosted the Annual South Texas Intertribal Powwow in McAllen, TX since 1980. Bill Govey hosts The Peoples Powwow in Flagstaff, AZ annually, and Doug (Haida/Tsimtsian) and Gloria (Yupik) Yates hosted a mid-winter traditional potlatch gathering in the Tsimtsian village of Metlakatla in 2008.

Wiconi International hosted its 6th Annual Mni Wiconi Wacipi “Living Waters Powwow” and Family Camp in July of 2010; 270 people attended the camp and 1200 people the powwow. It is another profound example of taking contextualization to a deeper “heart language” level. These unique inter-tribal powwows help to keep the people engaged in their tribal identity, bring much needed wholeness to their internal conflict between their faith and culture, and make room in their heads and hearts to genuinely, biblically dance their prayers to Jesus.

Many Native pastors and leaders are praying in a traditional tribal way, burning sage, cedar or sweet-grass as part of their prayers. Others are meeting in a traditional sweat-lodge ceremony as a place of worship, intercession and accountability. Others are praying with a “pipe” ceremony and holding rites of passage ceremonies for their sons and daughters as a place of discipleship. Others are using traditional designs, cultural religious motifs, musical styles, ceremonies, rituals, symbols and



Cheryl Bear performs her Native music at the Wiconi International powwow.



Wiconi International's "Dancing Our Prayers" Team leading worship time at the annual Missions ConneXion Conference in Vancouver, WA 2010

indigenous names and languages as vital components of their contextualization efforts.

With limited space I cannot go into detail in describing all of these events nor recognize all the people responsible. What has emerged is a recognizable movement of people who are introducing and practicing spiritually transforming cultural expressions of a truly biblical faith in Jesus. My dissertation is a careful analysis of these contextualization efforts, which are reshaping missionary attitudes and introducing effective new paradigms of gospel-telling that will redirect the focus of future missions and build Christian community among the tribes of North America. This is of profound significance.

It is my hope that other indigenous followers of Jesus around the world will be inspired, challenged, encouraged and strengthened to remain steadfast and emboldened in their local contextualization efforts wherever they live!

I invite you to visit our website to learn more about this and connect through our links page to various contextualization leaders and organizations around the world.

Hoheceturwe yelo— “and that’s the way it is.” 🌐

Indian Life is the largest Native Christian periodical in North America and has become a positive voice in support of contextual ministry in the USA and Canada. Please visit their website (www.indianlife.org) and consider becoming a subscriber.



End Notes

- 1 P. 44 McKnight, Scot. *A Community Called Atonement*. Abington Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 2007
- 2 P. 377 Kraft, Charles H. *Anthropology for Christian Witness*. Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York, 1996



THE SWEAT LODGE: CAN GOD USE IT?

Dot Everett

Numerous Native American tribes use a sweat lodge ceremony as a place of prayer, dedication and worship. The Lakota people call it the *inipi* ceremony. As a spiritual tradition, it has been controversial for Europeans for over three centuries. That a counterfeit sweat lodge has been in the news recently is no surprise.

Early explorers were fascinated by the sweat lodge and other Native American practices and traditions. When missionaries arrived, the fascination ended. Early missionaries told Native Americans that all their Native practices were evil and had to be abandoned in order to embrace Christianity. Some

Native groups did this willingly, while others were forced on threat of death to embrace Christianity. The early Native "Christians" went underground with their cultural and spiritual traditions. Outwardly, they practiced what the white people instructed them to do. Inwardly, their old traditions were the only "real" practices worthwhile

AS LONG AS OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD OF GOD IS THE FOUNDATION, THEN WE MUST ALLOW NATIVE PEOPLES AND PEOPLE OF ALL CULTURES TO DETERMINE WHAT FORMS AND PRACTICES THEY CHOOSE TO USE IN WORSHIPPING GOD.

to them. This syncretism has been how many Native groups have survived for hundreds of years.

Early Native people who sincerely embraced Christianity and followed the forms given to them by missionaries were "single or alone" believers.

They could not reach others from their tribe or group because they alienated themselves culturally from their own people. Only as these

individual believers began to band together did a church begin to be formed. But the bridge back to their culture was now made difficult to cross because of their individuality. In many Native cultures, decisions made are group decisions, not single individual decisions. When someone pulls away from the group, he has little or no influence in leading them to the kingdom of God.

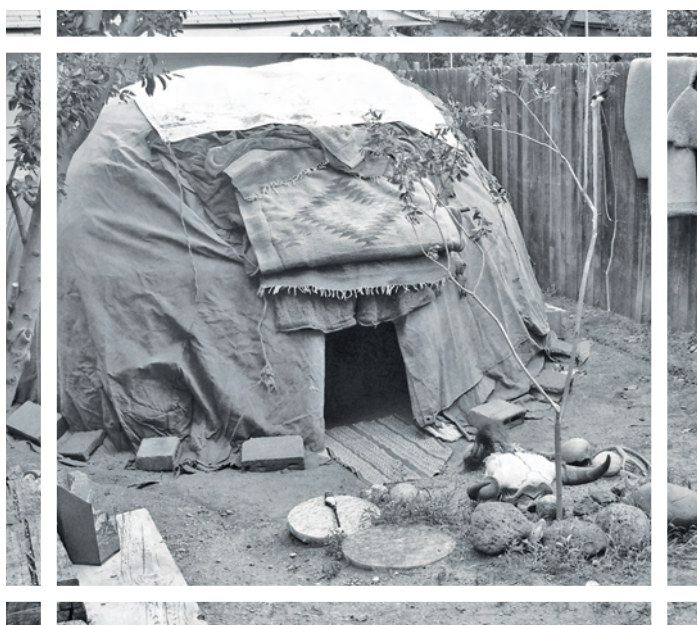
No culture may call another culture evil. Every culture has flaws and problems and certainly is not perfect. For the "superior" weapon-carrying outsiders to impose their culture on Native peoples is not only wrong, it is insulting, degrading, minimizing, insensitive and cruel. The lesson of history is that when cultural outsiders come in and tell a people that everything in their culture is evil, then we are cutting them off from the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit to transform their lives and their culture at His direction. The gospel travels on the road of love and respect, not by coercion

and force. Our job as Christians is to redeem the cultures we enter, taking past forms and practices and applying new meaning to them so that they become a means by which the gospel can be communicated to the unbelievers in a culture. If we want Native peoples to understand, accept and take ownership of the truths of Scripture, then we must respect their culture and not force our way of doing church on them. As long as obedience to the Word of God is the foundation, then we must allow Native peoples and people of all cultures to determine what forms and practices they choose to use in worshipping God and reaching their own people.



Dot Everett and her husband Art spent 50 years together in ministry to both Native Americans and International students. Art went into the presence of the Lord in July 2007 as a result of a bad fall. Dot continues their ministry relating to Native peoples and praying for them. She lives in Colorado Springs and has 13 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. For more information, you may contact her at doteverett1@yahoo.com.

Many of the cultural and spiritual practices of Native peoples were involved with invoking and pleading for help from the spiritual underworld. The same could be said if we go back far enough in our ancient Christian practices: the Christmas tree; the date for Christmas; Easter eggs; hymns that once were drinking tunes. The list is endless. The old children's story of the pot calling the kettle black applies here.



A sweat lodge in Colorado Springs constructed according to traditional Native practices

The sweat lodge is a place of spiritual refuge and mental and physical healing, a place to get answers and guidance by asking Creator God for the needed wisdom and power. The ideal of spiritual cleanliness, emotional growth and healing is central to the ceremony. In Indian country the sweat lodge has shown itself as a way to not only cleanse, but to release anger, guilt and shame in a safe way, and to bring people together as one. A safe place is created where all people feel comfortable. If we participate in ceremony together, we heal together, laugh, live and love together.

In recent years, there has been a strong movement towards contextualization of Christianity within

Native cultures. This is not an effort to continue the practice of syncretism, which simply layers Christian practices on top of old traditional ways. It is an effort for Native people to rethink how their old ways can be given new meaning. The form might remain the same or be similar, but the meaning would reflect deep Christian theology. Included in this contextualization movement is the practice of the sweat lodge.

Rituals and traditions vary from region to region and from tribe to tribe. They often include prayers, drumming, and offerings to Creator God. Some common practices and key elements associated with sweat lodges include construction materials, construction practices and protocols. The

most important part of sweat lodge etiquette is respecting the traditions of the lodge leader. There are risks involved, such as wearing metal jewelry, contact lenses and synthetic clothing, which the lodge leader will warn about before entering the lodge. The physical lodge is about five feet high and ten feet in circumference. The frame is usually willow poles, bent and tied together with natural twine. Sheets and blankets are tied to the frame, covering it completely. The final covering is natural tarps, never plastic or synthetic. The lodge must be able to "breathe."

New Age groups or other uninformed, unauthorized groups have made counterfeit lodges (really makeshift saunas), trying to copy the Native American traditions. Since these groups do not have the proper information, people have been hurt or killed. There have been sweat lodge-related deaths resulting from overexposure to heat, dehydration, smoke inhalation, overcrowding or improper lodge construction leading to suffocation. Unlike non-Native groups, Native peoples never charge money, and do not attempt to sell the sacred.

Authentic leaders have earned the right to both construct and lead a sweat lodge walk and teach the values of their culture in being humble, wise, caring and compassionate. Christian practices and wisdom become part of the whole experience.

A Pawnee friend, Myron Old Bear, lives at Medicine Wheel Mesa (which is located within an isolated region of the high desert plateau in western Colorado). He takes traditional Native American ceremonies and slightly changes some of them as needed so that they are based on the universal spiritual truths as found in the Bible. He states that many of his friends have been "burned" by organized religion and want nothing to do with it. However, they are desperately seeking spiritual truth, but not in the Church.



In the center of the sweat lodge is a hole where the hot rocks are placed.

Therefore, we have a great opportunity to share God's Word with those people within the context of Native American ceremonies.

The Purification Ceremonies (sweat lodges) that Myron conducts at Medicine Wheel Mesa are much different from some of the sweat lodge ceremonies that are currently performed, because he bases every ritual within the Purification Ceremony on biblical principles. For example, no amount of "sweating," singing of "Indian songs," or praying "general prayers" will purify our spirits, minds and bodies. The Bible says in 1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." Therefore, when people come to Medicine Wheel Mesa to participate in a Purification Ceremony, they are asked to go off alone and ask our Creator to reveal the wrong things they have done that they need to be "purified from" and then during the time they are inside the lodge, they are given time at the beginning of the ceremony to sit quietly in the lodge in the dark and ask our Savior to forgive them of those wrong things they have done, and they make a commitment to avoid making the same mistakes in the future, with our Creator's help.

Myron tells about the ceremonies he conducts on his property in Colorado: "When people come to our Native American ceremonies, I explain to them that there is no power in any ceremony. The ceremony is simply the bringing together of a series of symbolic rituals, and the power is hidden behind the symbol. Therefore, we must know the meaning of the symbol in order to experience the power the symbol represents.

"For example, I explain that when we bring in the first seven stones into the sweat lodge, the first four symbolize our Creator's power that exists in the Four Sacred Directions, the fifth stone symbolizes our Creator, the sixth stone symbolizes Jesus Christ and the seventh stone symbolizes the Holy Spirit. Frank Fools Crow, the powerful Lakota medicine man who

lived on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, and who died in 1989, taught that 'the God of the Indian was the same God the white man served.' He also explained to people that if we were going to follow God we had to become 'hollow bones' like Jesus taught when He said, 'If any man will come after me, let him take up his cross daily and follow me.' The cross was a place of execution. Jesus was teaching us that we must 'die daily to self' if we are going to follow Him. Frank Fools Crow taught about 'becoming a hollow bone.' A hollow bone is dead. It has no life in it. We must die to self if we are going to truly follow Jesus Christ.

"This is what we teach people in the sweat lodge. We explain that this 'dying to self' is the true purpose of the sweat lodge. However, instead of getting out the Bible and reading 'chapter and verse' to the people, we use symbolism to explain the same biblical teachings. People who come to our ceremonies are extremely frustrated with organized Christianity. However, they are desperately seeking spiritual truth. We explain that what they are seeking is in the Bible, but we use 'visual aids' such as sacred ceremonies like the sweat lodge to help them understand those biblical principles. This past summer we have had two women who came to Medicine Wheel Mesa accept Christ as a result of participating in the Purification Ceremonies."



The traditional Native sweat lodge is made of willow branches tied together and covered with natural materials that "breathe."

Myron is a prime example of a wise believer who is contextualizing the gospel for his Native people and showing great love and respect for them and for their culture. Because of his careful biblical teaching through Native symbols and forms, Native people are coming to faith in Jesus through the sweat lodge when no other approach would work. 🌐

Author's Note: Some ideas are from the Wikipedia article "Sweat Lodge;" the Web site "The Native American Sweat Lodge, A Spiritual Tradition;" and conversation with Myron Old Bear.



JESUS LIVES

AS GOOD MEDICINE FOR MY PEOPLE

Cheryl Bear

I am Dakelh from the Bear Clan in Nadleh Whut En, an Athabaskan Carrier tribe in Northern British Columbia, Canada. I was baptized a Catholic and came to a personal faith in Jesus Christ when I was eight years old. My own spiritual journey has led me to be a pastor and recording artist and to attend Bible college and seminary.

I am a "Great Story" teller. It is my desire to re-tell the great story of Jesus Christ, Creator's Son, who came to walk among us humans, reveal the heart and mind of Creator, die as the cleansing sacrifice for the wrongs of every person, and rise again from the dead.

way as a Native person. Fellow Christians and leaders were able to worship Christ in the way and style of the dominant culture of Canada's music, songs and dances, but the "Indian" way was always suspect. I felt that when I went to church I had to hang my "Indian-ness" at the door like a coat, to be picked up again as I was leaving the church. This dichotomy of being a Native outside of Church and a non-Native inside the Church was distressing to me.

In 1992 I started attending a Foursquare Church with my husband, Randy. It was there that I found a different attitude toward my "Native-ness." Cultural



Today, He lives as the Good Medicine for my people. There is healing and forgiveness for anyone who believes and follows Yeshua, Jesus. In one of my songs I quote Thomas a Kempis, "Without the Way we cannot go, without the Truth we cannot know, without the Life we cannot live..." followed by Native chanting and drumming to the word "Yeshua."

Although I grew up proud of my Native heritage, there was a time when I felt that my Native cultural expressions were not welcome in the Church, that is, I felt that I was not free to worship Christ in a Native

ALTHOUGH I GREW UP PROUD OF MY NATIVE HERITAGE, THERE WAS A TIME WHEN I FELT THAT MY NATIVE CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS WERE NOT WELCOME IN THE CHURCH.

expressions, songs, wearing of regalia, drumming and dancing were welcome as forms of worship. The first time I met Bryan Brightcloud, the leader of the Foursquare Native pastors and leaders, he was wearing his hair long and in braids. I was encouraged to write Native-style songs, sing and dance. Not long after this, many people from various denominations and churches started "finding" each

Dr. Cheryl Bear is a graduate of Pacific Life Bible College, and she has earned her M.Div. from Regent University and her D.Min. from The King's University. She is an award-winning recording artist, creating a contextual form of worship for Native peoples. For more information go to: www.cherylbear.com or Email her at: cheryl@cherylbear.com

other. The “moccasin telegraph” works well!

We had Jonathan Maracle and Broken Walls and Richard Twiss at the new church we started in Vancouver, BC. My band of Native singers and dancers, “The New Warriors,” were invited to perform at the “Many Nations, One Voice” conferences sponsored by Wiconi International, where we met and networked with other like-minded people with a similar vision to establish contextualized-style churches and ministry in Indian country. One of the highlights for our family, personally, is to attend the Family Camp and powwow sponsored every summer by Wiconi in Turner, Oregon. Most of our friends in contextualized ministry go there, too, with their families, and it is a wonderful time of fellowship together.

The past decade has seen us establish several more churches through our First Nations Bible College students (www.fnbc.org), including First Nations Church (www.firstnationschurch.com) in Los Angeles. We have taken teams of Native drummers and dancers to over 30 countries around the world, sharing the Great Story of Jesus to people of every color.

I have recorded two albums, with a third soon to be released, of my contemporary-style drum songs. My music has been recognized by NAMA (Native American Music Awards—Nammy) and several Aboriginal Peoples Choice Awards.

In 2008 our family felt a leading from Creator to leave our pastorate and to go out full-time in itinerant ministry. My family and I now live in a travel motor-home. It is our goal to visit every First Nations community, reserve and reservation in the USA and Canada, 1000 in total. As of the summer of 2010 we have been to just over 300. 🌐

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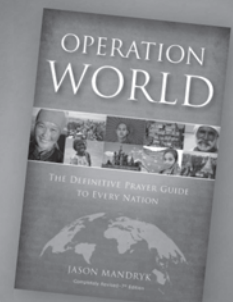
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TUESDAY
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WITH SPECIAL GUESTS:

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Max Lucado, Author, Speaker
Tom White, Voice of the Martyrs
Anne Graham Lotz, Author, Speaker
Louis Sutton, International Dir. WEC International
George Verwer, World Missions Advocate
And more with reports from around the world





THE JOURNEY OF "HOLE IN THE CLOUDS"

Casey Church (Hole in the Clouds), Pokagon Band of Potawatomi

My journey began in the spring of 1988 while working with the Indian Workers Conference of the United Methodist Church in Michigan. Here I accepted God's call to help lead a new approach to evangelize Native Americans. I learned all I could about the spiritual and religious ways of the Native peoples while pursuing a Bachelors degree in Cultural Anthropology. God made known to me His desire to see Native people find faith and freedom in Jesus within their own culture. Now I truly felt God accepting me as a Native American Christian. Before this time I strived to please God from another culture's religious expectations.

A forerunner in contextual ministry, the late Rev. Jim McKenny, a Prairie Band of Potawatomi of Kansas, was my spiritual mentor and guide. With his encouragement, my wife Lora and I began a meeting in our home in Grand Rapids, Michigan called "The Open Door."

songs. Musical groups like Rainsong, Cheryl Bear and Broken Walls are leading the way.

In 1997, little did we know that we would be establishing one of the first contextualized worship services in the country. In a rented facility, 50 Native people met to experience worshipping Jesus Christ from cultural expressions familiar to them in our new contextual ministry called "All Tribes Gathering." Not only were songs adapted to our Native way, we also used a familiar preaching approach with story-telling. We further used contextual Native Christian cultural methods to conduct weddings, funerals, blessings, puberty rights of passage, prayers, the Lord's Supper and baptisms with unique Native American expressions. We began to use our traditional sweat lodge ceremonies as prayer meetings for special occasions. It was during this time we met Richard Twiss, who was busy promoting contextual approaches to Native ministry in his "Many Nations, One Voice" conferences throughout the country.



Pastor Fern Cloud Sharing About Jesus and the Sacred Hoop (See page 16)



Pastor Casey Church of Thunderbird Ministries

We started to praise and worship Jesus Christ from within our "own" Native American cultural forms and expressions. We would begin our services by preparing ourselves for worship time by smudging, which is done by fanning sage smoke over ourselves as a symbolic way of cleansing. Further, we also used our traditional spiritual songs with the hand drum and flute. Today there are now several Native musicians creating Native praise and worship

Upon meeting and befriending Richard, we were invited to participate in these conferences and also to join the North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies, where I contribute to their symposiums and their academic journal.

In Michigan I was taught to use the sacred pipe for prayer by Rev. Jim McKenny. I still use the pipe as an authentic expression of my Christian life both in community and personal prayer times. While in



Casey and Lora Church

Michigan we ministered to a city with approximately 2,000 Natives. Now God has called us to start a Native ministry in Albuquerque, New Mexico, a city with more than 35,000 Natives where we moved in July 2000. We are currently starting a new faith community on the west side of Albuquerque called "Thunderbird Ministry." We have become a part of the Native community and have gained trust and friendship, which are the keys to reaching Native American people. Along with starting Thunderbird Ministry in Albuquerque, we also joined the "Wiconi International" family and have helped Richard and Katherine Twiss as staff with their Living Waters Family camp in Turner, Oregon and as their southwest representatives. God is using Living Waters Family Camp to change the face of Native Christianity in North America.

Throughout all these many years in ministry, Lora (a Navajo from New Mexico) and I (a Potawatomi from Michigan) have also managed to raise a young family of five children, four daughters and one son. Throughout our ministry years our children have become examples of how children can be raised to believe in Jesus Christ while also retaining their cultural and tribal identities as Native Americans. 🌐

For more information contact Casey Church at Lchurch111@comcast.net or by phone at 505-350-1390.

Healing the Sacred Hoop With Love and Respect

Fern Marie Cloud



Editor's Note: On July 4, 2010, the 219th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church USA opened in Minneapolis, MN with a worship service of 7,000 that included Pastor

Fern Cloud dressed in her Native regalia, reflecting her commitment to seeing her people have the freedom to worship Jesus in a culturally meaningful way.

My Dakota name is Aikipawin, which means Branch Woman. I am the great-great granddaughter of Dakota Chief Little Crow. I was full of hatred for white people, the Church and God. I came to be a follower of Jesus on December 8, 1978. Creator used a near-death experience and the testimony of Native believers to finally break down my resistance to His love.

I wanted my people to know Creator's love, too. But I knew that the typical approach to reaching Native people was never going to work. What my people were looking for was genuine love and respect, someone who actually was in touch with their culture and beliefs and acted on it. It has taken me almost 20 years to figure this out. I had to start with myself, to reconnect with the person God created me to be, and then I had to learn to embrace that person with love and acceptance. I understand the intergenerational trauma Native people live with. Most importantly, I know the power of love.

I have been active in contextual ministry since 1990, with our ministry called "Healing the Sacred Hoop" or "Healing the Circle of Life." I am a cultural consultant traveling all over the U.S., and internationally sharing our experiences as a Native Christian reaching Native people through culturally relevant ministry.

Our faith in Jesus is a way of life; like the circle, it is inclusive. I describe my life as a Native minister, as one who reads the Bible and then expresses that knowledge and teachings in a way that the people I serve can relate to, through our own God-given culture.

The ones who really need to hear the gospel message will never come to church, so we go to them. My family and I are powwow dancers. We dance our prayers with the people. This sends the message that, "Yes, you can be a Christian and still enjoy the culture of your people." We are also artists in schools, presenting the students with biblical principles through cultural teachings. We use the hoop to tell the story of how our spirit gets broken and that there is only one person who can heal that broken hoop and that is Wakan Tanka, God in our language. My family and I have been language activists, teaching our language through prayer and songs. When I interviewed with the elders for the pastor position here, they said that I have full control, but they will only sing in the Dakota language. Of course I was more than pleased to comply.

We know that our people have lost connection to who they are as a people. I realize that culture will not save them, but God has given us the wisdom to use our culture to start the healing process.

Jesus said that greater love has no person that one who would lay their life down for their friends; I have laid my life down for my people by allowing Creator to use my life to show my people how good He is and express the truth that "Jesus is the answer." 🌐

Fern Marie Cloud is the pastor of Pejubutazizi Dakota Presbyterian Church, located on the Upper Sioux Community near Granite Falls, MN. You may contact her by phone: 320-564-4954



PROGRESS AFTER 400 YEARS

Terry LeBlanc, Mi'kmaq/Acadian

Four hundred years ago on June 24, Chief Henri Membertou, along with 20-33 other Mi'kmaq tribal members, was baptized into the French Jesuit faith. The monument marking this historic occasion stands today on the Listuguj reserve in the Gaspé peninsula of the province of Quebec, Canada. Unfortunately, though the marker is real, the events it commemorates are remote to the contemporary experience of the vast majority of Mi'kmaq people.

The reality for many today is that Membertou's baptism is simply a historic memory. It has become so negatively colored by the last 150 years of Christian work that many call its very occurrence into question; some even vigorously dispute it in revisionist fashion. That a Sagamou (Chief) of Membertou's status would embrace Christianity—and his family with him—is alien to the experience of most Mi'kmaq today. In the face of the growing self-awareness of Native people of their historic cultures and religious traditions, the Church could easily become irrelevant.

The North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies (NAIITS) was founded in the belief that without significant change, the North American Christian church would continue to ignore Native North American peoples and their cultures in yet another, albeit this time mostly unintentional, effort at assimilation into mainstream Christianity. To introduce needed change, NAIITS emphasizes the inclusion of indigenous culture and worldview(s) in training future indigenous leaders.

Many paths have converged within NAIITS to create a roadway of scholarly inquiry and instruction—one that is rooted in an extensive personal and collective praxis of ministry and mission.

Terry LeBlanc, PhD (ABD) is Executive Director of the "North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies." For more information please visit their website at www.naiits.com

During the period since our early formation we have come to affirm the words of fellow Native scholar, Taiaiake Alfred, who asks and answers what has been a pressing question for our community:

What is "Indigenizing the academy?" To me, it means that we are working to change universities so that...our people are respected in, and hopefully even integrated into, the larger system of structures and processes that make up the university itself.

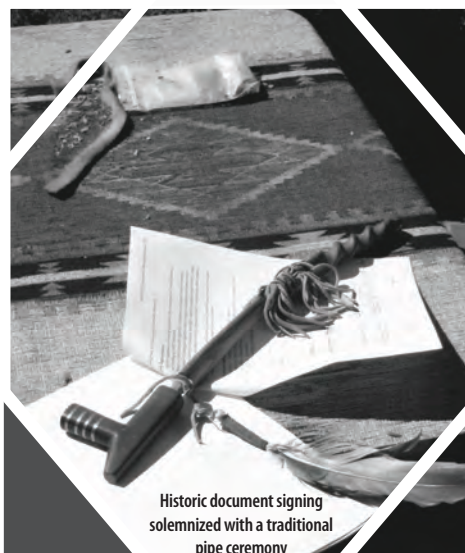
In the ten years NAIITS has been in existence, its growing team of practitioners and academics has undertaken the intentional development of Native North American scholarship in the areas of theology, biblical studies and mission.

During this period, NAIITS has hosted seven symposiums focusing on Na-

tive North American theological and missional issues; it has published six volumes of what has become an annual journal, featuring the presentations and papers of each symposium; and it has facilitated the publication of Native authors in various mainstream missiological and theological publications.

Beginning in its relationship with Asbury Theological Seminary in Kentucky, NAIITS has developed

or is in the process of developing working relationships and partnerships for graduate and post-graduate study with a number of institutions in Canada, the USA and Europe. As a result of this intentionality, the NAIITS community has recently graduated students with PhDs and one with a DMin. We have students in current doctoral



Historic document signing solemnized with a traditional pipe ceremony

A HISTORIC AGREEMENT WAS ENTERED INTO ON JUNE 12, 2010 BETWEEN THE NORTH AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR INDIGENOUS THEOLOGICAL STUDIES (NAIITS) AND GEORGE FOX EVANGELICAL SEMINARY AT NEWBERG, OREGON. THE AGREEMENT MARKS THE BEGINNING OF A NEW TYPE OF PARTNERSHIP AND IS THE REALIZATION OF A LONG-STANDING HOPE FOR A NEW WAY TO PROVIDE THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FOR NATIVE NORTH AMERICANS.

training, and there will be almost a score of students in graduate study this fall. In the history of advanced training of Native people within the traditions of the Church, from which its founders have come, this represents an unparalleled achievement. Simply put, what NAIITS is doing works!

Previous attempts to train pastors and educators from among First Nations people met with very limited success. These attempts focused on things external to, things foreign to, the way of being and thinking of Indigenous people, introducing us to conflicting feelings and attitudes about education in general and theological training in particular. Anti-intellectualism rooted itself into many of our peoples' thinking. As Roberto Dansie describes it, "The more they were exposed to formal education, the further they got from themselves." Taiaiake Alfred says it another way: "The whole of the decolonization process will have been for nothing if Indigenous education has no meaningful Indigenous character."

There are three shifts we are trying to make in hopes of providing an environment that is conducive to developing Native leadership within the wider Church. The first shift is found in a rediscovery of the story. Story addresses the issues with which people are actually dealing. At the same time, it creates confidence in the way narrative works, with which one does not lapse into a revived pharisaic attitude intent on building fences, one truth on another. Good fences, it turns out, do not make good neighbors, only placated or enslaved ones. Thus, there is a need to embrace the source of theology, our Indigenous spirituality and the gospel story. It is a story that is inclusive of Native people—as they are! Sitting Bull observed correctly,

"If the Great Spirit had desired me to be a white man, He would have made me so in the first place. It is not necessary for eagles to be crows."

Theology must happen on the margins, engaging students by resurrecting dialogical learning as they do theology.

The second shift moves us away from theology as the realm of experts to something that the common people understand, taking ownership over its transmissibility. This encourages the community to learn discernment so as to pass on the story to subsequent generations. We are therefore making an intentional shift away from institutionalization, seeking instead to use the institution to give its legislated authority to the moral authority already granted by communities to their respective leaders.

Furthermore, the learning environment is being

expanded to include a re-appropriation of the ethics and practices of orality. This will not downplay the importance of literacy, but by reviving orality, or dare we say a hybrid of the oral and textual, we seek to build communities of unity instead of extreme individualism and isolation.

The third and final shift we are making is to move from a position of isolation to one of community and communication. The Westernization of our communities has had many negative effects. But instead of trying to co-opt Western methods, which as Paulo Freire makes clear, often lead to harsher impositions of Western standards than the West would make itself, we are attempting to create a learning community that intersects with the cultural community of the learner.

This means that we seek not to isolate the instructor from the learner's community. The instructor travels to the place of the learner and vice versa. This makes the task more likely to impact the learner in a significant way. Rather than attempting to entice them out of their life experience, teach them a new life experience and then inject them back into their community, we encourage the context to become part of the learning process and therefore a more likely part of the transformed life experience.

NAIITS is both reactive and proactive. It is envisaged as a transitional, and hopefully, transformational approach. It is reactive in that we are moving to help our people transition from a colonial experience through a post-colonial experience of the world of knowledge and wisdom. It is proactive in that we are seeking to move past de-colonization to fan the flames of Indigenous thought so that the Church might be enriched through a reinvigorated Indigenous knowledge context.

We are attempting to build upon the existing strengths of both western academic tradition and Aboriginal heritage. For the Aboriginal community, adaptation is life's byword. What's most challenging in all of this is the inherent difficulty for Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people alike to believe that education that occurs in a local context—one lacking facilities and history—can carry the same prestige as that gained in a place which has significant infrastructure and history. But we are making progress.

Welalin (Thank you)! 🌐



WALKING OUT THE GOSPEL AMONG THE PEOPLE

Bill Gowey

It was April, 2001 in Cottonwood, Arizona. For the first time in our lives, my wife Jan and I experienced a worship service where Native American instruments and traditional regalia were allowed. The worship was so powerful that many Native people shared how this newfound freedom, freedom to worship Jesus as the people God created them to be, had touched their hearts. This three-day conference with Richard Twiss, Mary Glazier and the guys from Broken Walls changed the course of my life and our ministry.

and work to make our ministry a part of our local Native community, believing that we are to be walking out our faith among the unchurched Native people. Over the past 11 years I have met many Native Christians who take part in powwows and other Native American traditions as well.

One focus of our ministry “Reztoration” is reconciliation. We’re working to bring healing and break down the old walls of offense between many Native Americans and the Church because



Pastor Bill Gowey walking out the gospel in Oaxaca, Mexico

What started as a unique ministry in a small reservation church has grown into walking out the gospel of Jesus among Native peoples from Montana to the Zapotec people of the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca. Using Native dancing, drums, flutes and other instruments to worship our Creator has touched the hearts of many people, both Native and non-Native alike.

We attend powwows and other Native gatherings

of the Indian boarding schools and other issues. While at a local high school powwow I felt led of the Lord to offer a financial gift to support the youngest powwow dancers, recognizing the Church’s involvement with taking away language and culture from Native people in the past. The powwow committee allowed us to do this, but told me that I would have to give each child the gift and explain why we were doing this. I was announced as Rev. Bill Gowey, and it became



very quiet. I shared that we were offering this support and encouragement for these young ones to be proud of who God had created them to be, recognizing the physical, emotional and sexual abuse that happened at the boarding schools and asking forgiveness for the Church's part in it. As I walked out of the powwow arena, a 92-year-old Navajo grandmother took my hand and said, with tears in her eyes, "Thank you, that needed to be done a long time ago." For many non-Native people these are just offenses from the past, but to this grandmother it had been her life.

Over the past eight years I have been given permission to dance in the powwow circle. For me personally, some of my closest times with the Lord have been while I am dancing unto Him, offering my prayers for the people.

All of this has led our ministry to put on an annual traditional powwow in Flagstaff, Arizona. We work together with traditional Native people to make this happen. Through this bringing together of peoples, we are seeing many people touched and healed. We recognize the hurts of the past while working together to see hope for the future. We have seen Native and non-Native people touched by the Holy Spirit through the songs and dances. One woman came up to me after a service where we had some traditional powwow singers sing drum songs for us. The woman said, "Those songs made

me want to worship God, is that OK?" From Montana to Mexico and at our Native Christian gatherings in Flagstaff we are seeing lives changed. The dancing and traditional songs are helping to break down the barriers that keep many Native people away from the Church.

Offering gifts in a traditionally respectful way, seeking the blessing of tribal elders before we hold an event or even going to pray on the land has given us so many open doors to share the love of Jesus with unchurched people. God is restoring families, setting people free from drugs and alcohol and giving hope to hopeless people because the people in our ministry are willing to walk out the gospel of Jesus among the people in a culturally relevant and sensitive way. A traditional elder who attends our annual powwow wrote this in a letter:

This powwow is a way to have people experience God's love, a love that has compassion and no fear, and peace and no alienation between people(s). In this peaceful way, the teaching abilities of the powwow circle are empowered to flow. The capacity to touch people's hearts is mobilized in such peaceful and compassionate ways. 🌐

*For more info on Restoration Ministries, contact us
bgorwey@msn.com*

*Restoration- 2500 West Route 66 # 74 - Flagstaff,
Arizona 86001*





“When Mission Threatens”

Dave Datema, General Director, Frontier Mission Fellowship

“Welcome to my country,” he said with a gleam in his eye as he shook my hand. I was attending a powwow here in Pasadena, and the irony of the greeting was not lost on me. He represented the original inhabitants of this country who have lived here for millennia, and I represented the settlers who came only recently. Perhaps irony is second only to tragedy as the best word to describe the Christian mission to Native Americans. It is a history of mixed motives and contradictory impulses; the worst of human greed and the best of human love intertwined with a critical error: the belief that Christian community could not exist apart from European culture.

Probably the best-known Protestant missionary to the American Indians was John Eliot, the Congregational minister who began evangelism efforts to the Algonquin Indians of Massachusetts in 1644. He was certainly sincere and genuinely concerned about the welfare of the Indians in the wake of European settlement of their lands. By 1660 he had trained 24 Indian evangelists to reach their own people. A New Testament was published in their language in 1661 followed by an Old Testament in 1663, against the steady argument that he should just teach them English. By 1671 he had gathered more than 1,100 Indians into 14 “praying towns,” aligning with the idea that new believers must be separated from their unbelieving relatives. While the hindsight of history helps us see the errors of some of these practices, when you think of Eliot’s context, it was in fact a remarkable achievement (just ask David Brainerd).

However, all these events took place in a context of growing animosity and

grievance between the Indians and the English. In 1675 King Phillip’s War began, named after the Wampanoag king who felt threatened and decided to fight for his land, which was shrinking daily under the onslaught of English settlement. This was the same tribe that befriended the Pilgrims decades earlier, helping them survive and celebrating with them the “first” Thanksgiving in Plymouth in 1621 (first only to the English; the Indians had always done so). A few months after the war began, on December 16, 1675, an event occurred that brings out the tragedy and irony of the times: the Great Swamp Massacre. The Narragansett Indians, perceived allies of the Wampanoag, were attacked by the English. More than 300 mostly women and children, were burned alive in their wigwams. According to one early account,

[The] shrieks and cries of the women and children, the yelling of the warriors, exhibited a most horrible and appalling scene, so that it greatly moved some of the soldiers. They were in much doubt and they afterwards seriously inquired whether burning their enemies alive could be consistent with humanity and the benevolent principle of the gospel.

With a history that includes many stories like this, should we be surprised that after 400 years of Protestant missionary outreach to Native Americans we are still looking at a response rate of 3–4%? It is interesting to note that, in the very same period, Protestant missionary outreach to other parts of the world were generally more successful by comparison. Why? Were these others just better missionaries? I doubt it. One key difference is that they were usually part of a minority in a foreign land, while the missionaries to the Native Americans were part of an ever-increasing, competitive, soon-to-be

majority. In most of the places where missionaries have ventured, they have been a tiny minority. In short, they represented a lower level of threat.

Wouldn’t it be true to say, then and now, that the effectiveness of missionaries is directly proportionate to the level of threat they represent to those to whom they go? Some would argue that being a threat is an unavoidable consequence of genuine mission, that such confrontation is a mere reflection of the war between light and darkness. This is true, but not totally true. Not all aspects of a culture are threatened by the gospel message. Some aspects of culture are obliterated, to be sure, but others are redirected and others are left alone. There are very few examples in the New Testament where the invasion of the Kingdom threatened the livelihood of a person, unless it involved something spiritually immoral (Jesus and the money-changers, Paul and the idol-makers). By and large, the threat of mission was limited to those aspects of a culture in direct opposition to Kingdom values.

So while there will always be an offense attached to the cross, how can we avoid being unnecessarily threatening? How can unnecessary offense be minimized? First, we can rejoice with the increasing numbers of missionaries coming from countries not perceived as imperialistic world powers. This immediately and automatically makes them less threatening than an American missionary. This is a positive and growing trend. Second, whatever ethnicity we are and whatever the perception of our nationality, we need to seriously ponder how we may pose a threat to those we are trying to serve. The history of mission to Native Americans reminds us that where mission threatens, it often fails. 🌐

every ethne

PLUGGING INTO A MINISTRY NEAR YOU



Bryan P.

PARTNERSHIP

Two years ago I was sitting in the office with my co-worker at Every Ethne. It was just the two of us. Our vision? To be a resource for individuals, specifically college students across Iowa who desire to impact every ethnic people group on the planet. How were we going to do this? What was our strategy? Quite simple, really: plug into existing ministries to come alongside, assist and help their mission-minded students keep that vision in front of them. Our desire is the same as the leaders of these ministries: we want to see people become great disciple-makers. If they can do it in their own country, they will be more able to make disciples overseas. We knew a partnership would be underway when the leader of a group could say, "This is great—you guys are like... an extension of our ministry!"

By God's grace, we are continuing to see this vision come to fruition. Last fall, we had 23 different ministries partner together.

PERSPECTIVES EXPLOSION

As we meet with student after student, education about God's heart and what's happening throughout the world is critical. To broaden people's picture of who God is, we encourage students to participate in the *Perspectives* course.

With 10 classes throughout Iowa, 700 people finished *Perspectives* in spring 2010. As individuals continue to become interested in how God is mov-

ing throughout the globe and how they can be part of it, *Perspectives* needs to be available! We are focused on saturating Iowa with *Perspectives* and for this course to be offered within a 45-mile radius of where students live.

L a P

"What does life look like after *Perspectives*?" is a common question. So common, in fact, that

this year we created a one-day event, appropriately entitled "Life after *Perspectives*." Individuals from all over Iowa gathered together and learned how they together could become involved. We also gathered together those who desire to go overseas for the next stage of life. They have all the odds against them. The latest statistic is for every 200,000

individuals who apply for mission service, only 2,000 will actually make it. What can these individuals do here and now to help them actually make it overseas?

TOAG

"I have never talked about Jesus so much in my life," says Jason. He just spent the last six months going through life together with a group of people focused on mission service overseas.

It's a group focused on Training Ordinary Apprentices to Go. Within the group, people do a lot of life together, the accountability is high and the intentionality is real. The main areas of focus are Jesus, the kingdom of



Bryan currently is a mobilizer with Every Ethne—empowering this generation to bless the nations.

God and the desire for fruit among international relationships. If the desire is to live overseas, this is a group for individuals to consider—especially if they are going overseas within the next one or two years. Young professionals mostly make up TOAG. However, if a college student desires to participate, he or she needs to have the approval of a campus leader, since Every Ethne never wants to extract individuals from their campus ministries. TOAG is just one way Every Ethne is helping individuals set themselves up for long-term success.

THE FUTURE—IOWA

Today, Every Ethne Iowa Division has a staff of 12 strong. Although there will be some transition this summer, new recruits are underway to join us! While a majority will still be located in Iowa City, there will be staff in three other locations—Ames, Des Moines and Pella. The goal is to have every major state campus covered, and currently we have only one such campus to go. Maybe you are the one to finish this task...or start in your own state!

THE FUTURE—ALL 50 STATES

Do you feel called to Hawaii? So does Every Ethne! As our work in Iowa becomes established, other states are on the horizon. Currently there is work underway in Oregon, Alabama and Arkansas, but 46 states remain!

While the main structure of Every Ethne has been developed, there still remains a large area for growth. Just as C.T. Studd remained for a time to mobilize individuals to go with him to China, Every Ethne seeks to mobilize individuals towards opportunities where they will be set up for success and thrive. 🌐

If you have a passion for the people of God's world and desire to partner with like-minded, Kingdom-focused individuals, let Every Ethne know so we can plug into you and your campus ministry! info@everyethne.org

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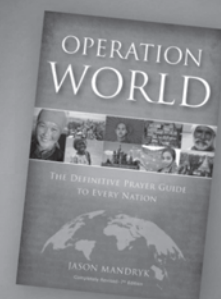
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And more with reports from around the world



Embracing Your Mission Journey to the Nations—

a guide and a process to get there

Steve Hoke and Bill Taylor

The key reason to develop a “perspective” as a global-vision Christian is to understand the world as God sees it. But a razor-sharp biblical perspective is not static, and you really cannot just stand by as a spectator. To see what God sees, and to value what God values, is so compelling and inviting that probably the most dangerous response is to do nothing. A true vision of the Triune Sending God’s mission thrusts you into the middle of all that He is doing throughout the world and all history.

Global Mission Handbook: A Guide for Crosscultural Service is built on three core phases, arranged in a logical and flexible sequence. It’s intended to help prospective cross-cultural servants chart (navigate, plan and pray) their journey to active engagement into global mission. It provides a pathway primarily for those who will be “goers,” but is also of crucial aid to the “growers”—the strategic mobilizers, church mission leaders, missionary trainers, mission agencies and support team colleagues.

If you are a “goer,” you seek to move out as soon and as wisely as you can into a more active role in global mission. If you are a “grower,” then you are committed to serving, investing, interceding for and supporting your sent friends. But, whatever role God opens for you, this shoe may fit you, whether you are in your twenties, thirties, forties, fifties or sixties...or older.

Within each major phase are several smaller footsteps. Sequence is not the critical issue; pursue the steps in any order, but be sure you keep them all before you. They are not markers that you accomplish and then stop doing. They are really converging courses of

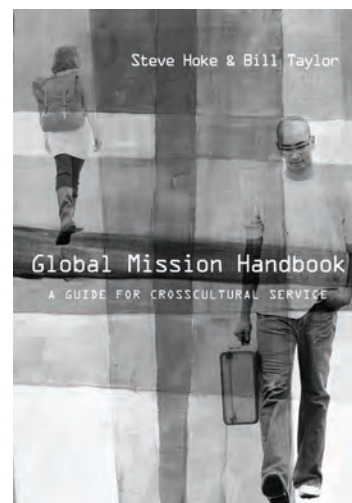
growth and obedience that you will pursue throughout your life. The point is to move into a path of obedience as a prolonged journey. Act boldly today, and walk purposefully to fulfill the vision God is giving you.

Before we engage the phases and specifics, we lay the groundwork by taking a careful “reading” of our times in our radically changed world, introducing some diagnostic tools for you, and presenting a profile of the prime, longer-term, cross-cultural worker needed today.

PHASE ONE: Getting Ready

1. Personal Spiritual Formation:

Who you are—your character and spiritual formation as a disciple of Jesus Christ—is essential to your mission role. Solid first steps to ensure an effective journey include clarifying your basic commitment, your spiritual gifts, your ministry burden and passion, your call, and making sure your spiritual foundation is solid. Finding a personal mentor early on in this journey is crucial to your long-term effectiveness.



Steve Hoke served as Vice-President of People Development with Church Resource Ministries (CRM) until this year, but now serves the broader mission community in leader development and strategic life coaching for mission leaders (still with CRM).



Bill Taylor was born and raised in Latin America of missionary parents, and taught in Guatemala for 17 years in leadership development, while helping plant a church among the professional class. Based in the USA since 1985, Bill served as the Director of the Mission Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance from 1985 to 2006.. Bill and his wife Yvonne live in Austin, TX, his base for global ministry. Bill's blog: www.TheGlobalPilgrim.com

2. Body Life Design Team—Discovering Your Ministry Identity in the Body of Christ:

Spiritual formation takes place primarily in communities of faith, not in isolation. Covenant relationships are vital for your spiritual growth and transformation. That is the spiritual home base from which you will launch cross-culturally. Understanding your church's unique vision, how it functions for missions, and finding your place and gifted role in it are key components to your ultimate effectiveness in cross-cultural service. Make disciples and learn to form communities of faith in your home culture. These will hone your ministry skills and help sharpen your spiritual giftedness before serving in a cross-cultural setting. Again, pray for, seek out and submit to fruitful elder women and men in your local church as mentors and kindred spirits who will encourage you along the life-long pilgrimage.

3. Exposure to Other Cultures:

We all increasingly live in multicultural contexts, challenged to understand others, appreciate diversity, and learn other languages. Gain early cross-cultural exposure, either locally or globally, and thus stretch your mental, physical and spiritual muscles. Countless numbers of churches and agencies offer one or 1-2-week exposure trips and 1-24-month short-term ministry experiences. Be wise in your short-term trips. They all can be significantly used by God, but remember that the best short-term trips don't substitute for the critical need for long-term missionaries. Strategic short-term mission and your intentional study will test your gifts, your passions, your dreams, and your capacity to go longer-term.

4. Critical issues in Schooling and Support Raising:

Academic preparation for long-term ministry needs to be customized to your experience and practical training, skills, and gifts and long-term dreams. How can you broaden your worldview and enrich your basic educational background, and perhaps get a key certification that will open doors and acquire visas in the future? Not everyone has to have a university degree to be used by God, but don't cut your formal schooling short just because you suspect God is running out of time or is short on money. College not only broadens your intellectual horizons; for many it's an intense course in developing relationships and in learning how to witness, work and live in community.

Check out the possibility of studying abroad and earn academic credit as you grow your world. Seek these opportunities especially in restricted-access

nations, where only visiting students or language learners are granted visas. This way schooling doesn't interrupt education but actually completes it.

PHASE TWO: Getting There

5. Church or Agency Connecting and Courting:

What sending group or "team" is the best fit for you as the vehicle for service? It's not really about a solo career choice for personal fulfillment but about obedience to our Lord and bearing fruit. Start from your home base, your living, fruit-bearing organism of church life which partners your efforts with a mission agency.

What kind of team do you need to make you most effective and to help you grow the most? What kind of leadership do you need to keep you focused and effective? Many strong teams are intergenerational and multicultural. Since cross-cultural ministry is an intense crucible for character development, you want to join an experienced and caring group that is committed to your long-term spiritual, social and ministry growth and development.

You won't have difficulty finding strong churches and mission sending agencies with a wide span of cross-cultural ministry interests. Agencies range in size from very small to huge. Begin with input from your home church. Check out the agency's theology and history, model of ministry and vision, ethos and leadership. Evaluate their commitment to missionary

Gain early cross-cultural exposure, either locally or globally, and thus stretch your mental, physical and spiritual muscles.

development and care. Every agency has a personality, and you want to discover their chemistry or organizational culture before landing overseas. Talk with several until you find a few with whom you are compatible on the major issues.

Some agencies are very focused, for example, some plant churches among Muslim peoples while others serve the existing church. Some work with all the major blocs of peoples: Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, seculars, animists and post-moderns. Many have broad, holistic ministries, from business as mission to relief and development, to justice outreach, to literature and medical mission, leadership training and theological education. You are seeking a ministry family with shared values and ministry focus. Be sure your agency is committed to long-term church-planting.

6. Ministry Role and Assignment Search:

So what about your specific team, ministry, geography, assignment and role as you follow the sending and empowering Spirit of God? Who is this people

group? Where is this context? How can your passions, gifts and training be used within a team setting to see people come into transforming relationship with Christ, or where you can help build up the national church? Searching isn't "picking out what I'd like to do." Some of the best initial assignments may be made by discerning senior leaders. Early assignments are usually the times in which you discover who you really are and how flexible you are.

Almost all of us have been "divinely deflected" from our original job or career path. But God was present, and while serving we found our life-mission. Other best-lived lives were sometimes devoted to one task, people or place through life. The key is to explore what God is doing as you seek to discover your place in God's overall plan. When God's gifting and initial assignment become clear, are you willing and ready to step out in obedience as a committed team player?

7. Hands-On, Intentional Missionary Training:

Let's assume you've completed your basic academic and skill-set training, and you've had serious on-the-job ministry training within a local church. By now you have had a rich variety of short-term mission trips, and perhaps as long as two years in a cross-cultural ministry experience. You've been stretched, and you've grown stronger and wiser as a result.

Now it's time to figure out what kind of intentional, practical missionary training and/or advanced equipping you're going to need. The kind of missionary role you will fill, and the particular continent, country or people groups among whom God wants you to minister, will focus the specific requirements. It requires time and serious ministry experience to develop competencies in three important dimensions: character and spiritual formation; growth in relationships and ministry formation (skills); and appropriate knowledge for the task ahead. Team-building, language and culture learning are also essentials of a cross-cultural servant's "Basic Training."

We cannot conceive of anybody going into, for example, the Muslim world, without serious study that prepares them for this kind of ministry. But too many people short-cut their preparation and pay for it later. How long should this season last? Perhaps from 6-24 months, depending on the future assignment.

The most relevant preparation for church-planting in another culture is participation in and significant responsibility on a team establishing Christian communities or planting a church at home. Starting evangelistic Bible studies, creating cell

groups, raising up leaders and discipling new believers to the second and third generation are critical church-planting skills.

PHASE THREE: Getting Established

8. Apprenticeships and Internships:

Effective missionaries don't just emerge fully-formed from their educational experience. Hands-on ministry either at home or in another culture tests what you've

Effective missionaries don't just emerge
fully formed from their educational experience.

Hands-on ministry either at home or in another culture
tests what you've learned, provides models in ministry,
and helps you develop your own approach for ministry.

learned, provides models in ministry, and helps you develop your own approach for ministry. Once on the field, a structured internship is the best way for new missionaries to learn the ropes and the rules of the game in another culture. National pastors or experienced missionaries are the best on-the-job mentors to aid your effective acculturation. Apprentice yourself to a master craftsman or woman for maximum ministry learning in your first years on the field.

9. Life-Long Learning: On-the-Job, On-the-Field:

When cross-cultural workers stop learning, they die. So plan to finish well by establishing a life-long learning pattern early in your career. Develop life-changing goals in yearly reading, self-study and personal development in the triad of spiritual, ministry and strategic formation. Being accountable to peers and to mentors is one way to insure that you are growing for all you're worth! Many will profit through ongoing degree-granting programs that upgrade skills and ministry viability. The key is to keep growing consistently, even as you grow in age and discover new gifts, needs and desires in yourself.

10. Finishing Strong and Well:

God's pilgrimage is rich and vast, the journey is life-long, and you want to end your journey more in love with Jesus than when you started. Understanding the keys to life-long development and knowing how to intentionalize your spiritual development will help you grow stronger through cross-cultural service. Remember the three cluster issues that ensure long-term fruitful service: vital spiritual formation and growth, relating well to colleagues, and the right kind of pre-field training. Note, we don't assume that mission service is necessarily a life-long thing for you in the same place. The keys are faithfulness, integrity

and passion for God's mission through all of life, regardless of your geography or job.

Scripture and church history teach us that it is hard to "finish well." And a specific word to the "senders": be the kind of person who helps others to start well and then finish well.

Drawing to a Close:

God is at work around the world fulfilling His Mission. Charting your journey means that you are intentional in joining the Triune, sending God. It means taking time to pray and listen and plan how you are going to get actively involved. It means taking intentional moves forward rather than being

shoved around sideways by the pressures of peers, culture and career.

Your own journey is unique and a life-changing process. These three phases and sub-steps will help you transform your newly gained "perspective" into a powerful vision for spiritual change. *Global Mission Handbook* challenges you to grow as you prepare for longer-term service, and includes space for you to keep notes, reflect, journal and gather information on the pilgrimage. You will find a key annotated bibliography and other resources in the back of the handbook.

You and the nations await each other. 🌐

Questions & Answers

1. MF: For whom did you guys write this book?

We wrote first for those who plan to enter longer-term cross-cultural work, i.e., the longer-term missionary candidates. We also wrote for local sending churches and mission pastors, for mission agencies and other sending organizations. We wrote for mission mobilizers, for training schools and programs. We wrote for *Perspectives* grads and the thousands who attend a church or other mission conference. After a course or conference, what happens? We wanted to chart a path that people could follow, to help them "get there" after being captured by God's heart for the nations.

2. MF: How does the book apply to *Perspectives* grads, or those who have attended an *Urbana* or *Passion* conference?

In many ways the book was written expressly for the graduate of the *Perspectives* study course—men and women of all ages who are hearing God's voice to prepare for cross-cultural service. We have long felt that the majority of people who complete the course are at a turning point in their lives. Their worldview has now been stretched to the biblical horizons of seeing the Father's heart and purposes for the peoples of our globe. They have a strong sense of a deep drawing, a "second calling" if you will, to respond by engaging in God's global agenda.

This book seeks to mentor and serve for those people—men and women newly sensitized to God's plan. Now they want to take the initial steps of spiritual formation, church involvement, self-discovery of gifts and ministry passion, and onward it goes. The handbook serves as a companion

to individuals and couples beginning to navigate their journey to the nations.

3. MF: How would a mobilizer or mission pastor use the book?

There are three essential ways in which mission pastors, mobilizers, those at training schools and other arenas can use this tool effectively:

- First, give copies to every person who seeks your advice on how to get involved in missions, but also...
- Second, after giving them a copy, offer to meet with them to walk with them through the process, grappling with key chapters or to dialogue with them about any questions that arise as they read.
- Third, the journal pages at the end of each chapter provide opportunity for the responsive reader to share their heart with a mission pastor or mission mobilizer. Any sensitive mobilizer can utilize the reflections of the candidate to inform them as to the kind of encouragement, advice or support the reader needs.

Global Mission Handbook is meant to be a mentoring manual for mobilizers and mission pastors to use with the committed and responsive people the Spirit brings into their lives as they consider the journey towards full-time, long-term, cross-cultural service.

4. MF: How does someone order the book?

Perhaps the easiest and least-expensive way (if you want a volume order, then check with Bill or Steve) is at <http://amzn.to/apBery>

His Kingdom Coming to Afghanistan?

Peter Bruce

Editor's Note: We celebrate the lives of the ten aid workers murdered in Afghanistan on August 5, 2010. Their mission of love and mercy in service to the people of Afghanistan will not be forgotten.

On May 31, 2010 a local, private Afghan TV station, Noorin TV, showed video clips on the evening news program in Kabul of Afghans worshiping and being baptized in the name of Jesus. The TV station continued to air these video clips for the next week in an apparent attempt to incite a fundamentalist Islamic outcry against these Afghan citizens who would dare to deviate from the national religion of Islam.

If nothing else, this event had a major impact on Afghan society:

- It highlighted for the Afghan believers that their government wasn't ready to recognize them as a legitimate and protected minority.
- While demonstrations occurred against Afghans changing their religion, and while threats were made by some government officials, it is now common knowledge that a small but growing number of Afghan believers reside within their communities.

- The "shock and awe" factor of the existence of Afghan Christians has come and gone and will never again have the same impact.
- Western governments must now evaluate the idea of real freedom for the Afghan people. Is the West (those countries that are funding this new government and sending our young people to fight for freedom) motivated to hold the Afghan government accountable to protecting their citizens according to their own constitution and the UN Charter that they have signed?

Conflicting Allegiance

Islam is inherently apostaphobic, and leaving Islam (apostasy) is a capital offense under Afghan law. It is illegal to proselytize. At the same time, the Afghan Constitution agrees to abide by the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states clearly in article 18, "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."

This conflict between the old Islamic/Afghan Tribal system and the desire of the new Afghan Government to join the community of nations (nearly all of whom have signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) highlights the ideological struggle for the soul of this nation.

A vigorous debate centers around the opening clause in the Afghan Constitution that states that no law can be passed that contradicts Sharia Law.



Peter Bruce (pen name) has worked in Afghanistan for more than a decade under five different governments. His work includes restoring hospitals, building schools, starting small businesses and advising Afghan government officials.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is not a law, but a treaty, which in their constitution they have agreed to follow. Many in the West are now saying, "You cannot have it both ways. Either you wish to move forward and be recognized as a member of the community of nations, or you revert back to your old tribal ways as a closed Islamic country."

In this small nation, roughly the size and population of Texas, most of the major armies of the world have converged to fight for freedom for the Afghan people. Donor nations, including the United States, have poured in billions of taxpayer dollars to fund this experiment called a representative government. In many ways religious freedom, or the lack thereof, is a benchmark in how successful we are in ushering in "The New Afghanistan."

The Taliban who represent the local insurgency are supported by the international terrorists (Al Qaeda) and some of the neighboring countries who have an interest in maintaining the turmoil and confusion. Recent attempts by the Afghan government to reach out to the Taliban to discuss reconciliation have resulted in one clear demand by the insurgency: Sharia Law must be the Law of the Land.

This struggle is not only a battle of armies, resources and ideologies. This is a major spiritual battle for the heart and soul of this nation. After the Soviet Union left in defeat in 1989, the Mujahedeen period began and plunged the nation into chaos and lawlessness.



It produced the largest refugee migration in human history. Fully one-third of the nation was in exile, with roughly 3.5 million refugees fleeing to Pakistan and another 3.5 million camped out in Iran. That is when the Taliban emerged to attempt to bring order out of chaos and return the country to conservative Islamic practices. This movement was soon hijacked by the fundamentalists who were intent on enforcing strict Sharia Law.



The harsh treatment at the hands of the Taliban, their strict, almost medieval enforcement of their version of "pure Islam," including the amputations of hands and feet, stoning, public executions, banning of music, kite-flying and disrespectful treatment of women, have all led to many Afghans becoming disillusioned with Islam. This, coupled with the influx of foreign UN workers, NGOs (non-government organizations), contractors, business people and foreign troops from around the world, following the events of September 11, 2001, have prompted Afghans to ask, "What do you believe?" And now with another clampdown from the Afghan media and government condemning those who might consider another way of thinking, Afghans are wondering, "What are they afraid of?"

Many other Muslim countries are open to Christian churches operating in their land. That is why I see this struggle as a battle for the soul of Afghanistan, because the reason and logic of the country's current leaders do not hold up to the experience of Muslims around the world. Nations like Indonesia, Egypt, Morocco, the United Arab Emirates and even Pakistan, to name a few, allow Christians a safe place in their society to worship. Now it is time for Afghanistan to do the same. In their own constitution, they have declared that they will become like these other nations and abide by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Why Are Afghans Turning to Christ?

"The gospel of the Kingdom is first and foremost attractive," says my good friend Joseph. This is true everywhere and especially in Afghanistan. One Pushtun tribal leader said last year, "These Taliban are not good Muslims; they do not obey the Q'uran; they do not care about the Afghan people; they are cruel people."

Increasingly Afghans are meeting others who follow Jesus. Some have arrived as soldiers from NATO countries to protect Afghanistan from its enemies. Some are UN workers or members of other aid organizations, or contractors and business people who are there to assist in rebuilding this country. Some are Afghans who lived in exile from their nation during the Taliban regime, found a new faith in Christ, and have now returned to their native land.

What Afghans are finding is that it is possible to live in real freedom! Galatians 5:1 says, "It is for freedom that Christ has set you free, do not again put on a yoke of slavery." They no longer need to be ruled by fear and intimidation. Some, like Abdul Rakhman, who was sentenced to death by some Afghan fundamentalists, and later was deported from the country, have learned that it would be better to suffer death at the hands of fundamentalists rather than renounce their faith in Christ.

Stories abound in Afghanistan about meeting the Lord in a dream or vision. Some workers have begun to ask Afghans, "Have you ever had a dream about a man in white?" as a way to open a conversation. A young man in Eastern Afghanistan, Najib, tells this story: "I had a copy of the Injil (New Testament) and had read parts of it. One morning I awoke early and went to the forest for a walk in the cool part of the day. On my walk I was met by Isa Masi (Jesus). I was so amazed! The next day I got up early to see if we could meet again. Yes, He was there! I was afraid to tell anyone because I thought He might not come back. Every day for three months I walked with Him in this forest."

Truth is its own best defense.

Truth will defend itself.

In Afghanistan today, the forces of darkness are determined to hold on to this country, but the truth of God's plan for His people is beginning to prevail.

In the words of the Prophet Isa Masi (Jesus) in Matthew 12:42-43, an evil spirit is cast out only to return with seven other spirits more wicked than itself.

The spiritual struggle for Afghanistan is very evident and mirrors these verses in Matthew 12. Following the events of September 11, 2001 the Taliban were driven from power in Afghanistan. The commitment of the West was to help establish a legitimate representative government and to support the establishment of a national army and police force for the country.

To this end a perimeter was established around the capital city of Kabul to provide security. Soon, the Taliban began to seep back into the country and set up operations outside of this perimeter in the rural provinces. Today it is reported that the Taliban have a shadow government in all 34 provinces.

As the Body of Christ we should not look to military leaders or others to win this battle. Only the Body has the right motivation and knows what to do to see real transformation

happen in Afghanistan. We have all the resources necessary to accomplish the task. What we lack most is a vision for how to accomplish this work.

Vision

The Bible teaches that "Without a vision the people perish." The gospel is what Afghanistan needs. A blueprint for action is found in Isaiah 58:6 and Matthew 25:35.

Both of these verses talk about meeting the felt needs of people. When we who are called by His name begin to demonstrate the unconditional Love of God, people respond. Often the response sounds something like this: "Tell me again why you are doing this? What is motivating you?" Then we have earned the right to share our personal testimony and the freedom in our own lives. People then can begin to explore this "Good News" themselves.

The government of Afghanistan is searching for answers as it struggles to move forward. Corruption, violence, fear and confusion continue to plague this country. The solution is for a clear vision to be presented to the Afghan people, followed by committed leadership to oversee its implementation.

Afghanistan needs people of vision, wisdom and truth to help them move forward. Now is the time for the Church to respond and to help Afghanistan to become a nation that honors God and begins to receive His blessings.

For more information on how you can be involved in the future of Afghanistan, please contact Peter Bruce at afghan.concern@gmail.com. 

Afghan Christians Respond

Excerpts from a letter to the Body of Christ worldwide
June 9, 2010:

To the Body of Christ:

We left our country because we were sentenced to death on account of our Christian faith. So, dear brothers and sisters (the Body of Christ), we (Afghan Christian Community in New Delhi) on behalf of all Afghan Christians request you to support us by your prayers and practical measures. Let's tell the Afghan Government that we are not pagans and infidels, we are not criminal because of our Christian faith, and let's tell them not to sentence us to death.

May God bless you!

*Afghan Christian Community in New Delhi, India
(Obaid S. Christ)*



RAISING LOCAL RESOURCES

The Importance of Assumptions

Glenn Schwartz, Executive Director, World Mission Associates

When it comes to the dependency syndrome, much of our success or failure can be traced to the assumptions with which we begin. A colleague in WMA ministry, Jean Johnson, says it this way: "What we do on day one [of our ministry] affects day 100, and day 1,000 and day 10,000." The assumptions with which we begin are like small, self-fulfilling prophecies that point us toward success or failure in the long-term. Proverbs 23:7 reminds us that as someone thinks in his heart, so is he.

How is unhealthy dependency created in the Christian movement? It often happens when we assume that the people we are called to serve are "too poor to give anything back to God." This assumption affects the way new believers see themselves and how they respond to claims of Christ upon them! Sometimes new believers conclude that they are poor and always will be. Think about that in terms of a beginning assumption. If not challenged, that attitude can remain with them for a lifetime, even several generations. Though what they have to give may seem to be small, when it is given, God can multiply it, thus making it greater than anyone might have thought. A church leader in East Africa once said that if we give nothing to God, when it is multiplied it is still nothing!

Along this same line, Jean Johnson, whom I mentioned above, coined the phrase "premeditated sustainability." Some missionaries have intentionally and intuitively sowed the seed of the gospel in such a way that new believers learned to give something to God in return for the gift of salvation. Others felt they should be "excused" from giving to God because they appeared to have so little. It is important that those coming

to Christ begin with the assumption that they have something to give to God, thereby avoiding the unhealthy dependency which so easily develops. Imagine how different newly-started churches would be if they began with that assumption from the very beginning.

While one faulty assumption can lead to long-term dependency, another assumption leads to the privilege and joy that accompanies giving to God. Consider the story of the Macedonian believers in 2 Corinthians 8. The Apostle Paul described them as being in severe trial and extreme poverty. Yet they had two things in their favor: they had a *desire to give* and a *joyful spirit*. Out of their severe trial, overflowing joy and extreme poverty (verse 2) the Apostle Paul said they *urgently pleaded with us* for the privilege of giving (verse 4). Paul obviously did not begin with the assumption that they were too poor to give to God's work.

Some time ago in this column I told a story that illustrates the point I am making here. A church in West Africa decided to evangelize about 30 villages. They knew it would be costly, so they prepared a budget, the equivalent of about \$100,000 in CFA francs. One church leader assumed that was too costly and that it could not be done. However, a second leader suggested that they change the beginning assumption and ask everyone to bring what they could – whether an egg, a chicken or a cow. (2 Corinthians 8:12 reminds us that the gift is acceptable according to what one has.) When they launched the project on that basis, they raised not only the entire budget, but they *had enough left over* to buy a vehicle for the project.

Notice that one man's assumption was

that it *could not be done*. Another began with the assumption that it could be done. In a sense, both men would have ended up being right. If they had listened to the first man, the project would most likely have failed because they began with the assumption that "it could not be done." Thankfully, the assumption of the second man prevailed, and victory was achieved and success realized.

Assumptions are very powerful things. They tell us something about the condition of our faith. If we believe something can be done with God's help, we will most likely proceed on that basis. This does not mean that we should become unrealistic and with human effort alone try to create a man-made miracle. God would not be pleased with that kind of self-serving effort. But when our efforts are rooted in the heart of God and then communicated to the hearts and minds of the people we serve, we can avoid the unhealthy dependency that might otherwise develop. In Exodus 35, Moses launched the drive for resources for the building of the tabernacle by saying "it is what the Lord commanded" (verse 4). In 1 Chronicles 29 King David launched the fundraising drive for building the temple by saying "this palatial structure is not for man but for the Lord God" (1 Chronicles 29:1). Notice that both of those stories begin with God-centered assumptions.

It is God-honoring to begin with faith in our hearts and strive toward a goal that comes from God – bringing people to a commitment that preserves dignity. We can do this counting on God's provision because He is not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9). 🌐

FURTHER REFLECTIONS



A Big Mistake

Greg H. Parsons, Global Director, U.S. Center for World Mission

How can something be God's sovereign will and also be a big mistake?

While heart-wrenching to us, we know God is glorified through suffering. While we can't understand, it can galvanize believers to pray and seek God to turn this to advance the gospel.

By now you have heard that in early August, ten believers working in medical aid in Afghanistan were murdered. One of those was Tom, who with his wife, Libby, had served in the country for 34 years. They raised three daughters there. Some of us at the USCWM met Tom and Libby when they spoke here a few times over the years.

Like you, many thoughts flooded my heart and prayers as I heard about this.

First, these are the kind of people we need in the task. They deeply loved the people, knew one of the main languages well and understood the culture. They didn't give up. They laid down their lives for the Lord.

THE LIVES OF TOM, AND THE NINE OTHERS WHO WERE ALSO GUNNED DOWN, WILL, THROUGH OUR PRAYERS, BE LIKE A SEED THAT DIES AND IMPLANTS THE LIFE OF THE GOSPEL IN THIS PLACE OF TURMOIL AND PAIN.

It would have been easy to say, "30 years is enough" and taken a desk job back home.

As time passes, we will see some of the amazing details of God's provision through all of their lives and deaths. We still won't know the countless number of lives impacted by them over these years. The former Afghan foreign minister and a student of Tom, Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, was quoted as saying: "Dr. Little travelled the length and breadth of Afghanistan, treating

thousands and thousands of Afghans." One estimate: Tom had treated 250,000 Afghans since arriving in the 1970s.

No matter what happens next, we know God has been at work, is at work and will be at work—nothing will thwart His will.

But, I believe this was a big mistake by Satan! Because I believe, by faith, that:

- Afghans will realize that this is *not* the Afghanistan they want. They do not want to live under ruthless leaders who care more about their power than people who need eye care.
- Afghans, tens of thousands of them, who have been served by these faithful servants will rise up against the Taliban and other evil forces and resist their now powerful sway.
- *You* are going to pray. You are going to encourage others to pray and get involved sacrificially. My

friend, Ajith Fernando, was quoted as saying,

People who are unfulfilled after pursuing things that do not satisfy may be

astonished to see Christians who are joyful after depriving themselves for the sake of the gospel.

- As a result of growing prayers and mobilization, new believers will be sent out.
- We will all pray that this attack of our real Enemy will end up being a tool in God's hand to break the power of the Taliban in Afghanistan and other evil, and bring the gospel in power.

- The lives of this man, and the nine others who were gunned down, will, through our prayers, be like a seed that dies and implants the life of the gospel in this place of turmoil and pain.

We shouldn't need this kind of motivation, yet historically God has used these kinds of events to mobilize His children to action. It happened 55 years ago when five missionaries were killed in a tribal area in Ecuador. It also happened with Chet Bitterman in 1981, and with several other missionaries since.

Chet Bitterman wrote in his journal in 1978:

The situation in Nicaragua is getting worse. If Nicaragua falls, I guess the rest of Central America will, too. Maybe this is just some kind of self-inflicted martyr complex, but I find this recurring thought that perhaps God will call me to be martyred for Him in His service in Colombia. I am willing. (According to his biography, *Called to Die*.)

These and others are spoken of in Revelation 6:9b when John saw "those who had been violently murdered because of the testimony they had given." John is told they must wait until the full number was reached of those "who were going to be killed as they had been" (vs. 11).

Will you commit to pray as I outlined above? Together, we can turn this into a big mistake of the Enemy. Let us know if you are willing to pray. Sign up on the USCWM Facebook page to log your commitment, or write or email me: greg.parsons@uscwm.org [facebook](#) [globe](#)

Chief Little Crow and the Unnecessary War of 1862

By Rick Wood

Editor's Note" In the latest issue of MF, Sept Oct 2010 on page 16 we have an article by Fern Marie Cloud who is the great-great granddaughter of Chief Little Crow.

Little Crow was Chief of the Dakota Sioux tribe near present day South St. Paul, Minnesota. His story and that of his people is one of betrayal, broken promises, racial hatred and murder at the hands of the US government and white settlers, but it did not have to be this way. Like many instances in the long battle to occupy the continent, the white settlers could have lived in peace with Little Crow and his people. But instead of love and respect as the gospel demands, the white settlers of the area responded with hatred and callous disregard for the needs of the Dakota Sioux. The result was a senseless war with atrocities committed by both sides. I present this story as one example from the thousands of "woundings" that Satan has inflicted on the hearts of the Native peoples of North America so that their hearts would be hardened and they would reject the truth of the gospel.

Under treaties signed in 1851, Little Crow and the Dakota Sioux agreed to leave their ancestral land for a reservation in exchange for promises by the US government for yearly appropriations of funds for food.

Little Crow tried to get along with the customs of the United States. He visited President James Buchanan in Washington, DC, replaced his native clothing with trousers and jackets with brass buttons, joined the Episcopal Church and took up farming. However, by 1862, stress built up in his community as cheating by traders came to light and Congress failed to pay the annuities mandated by treaty. As the tribe grew hungry and as food languished in the warehouses of the traders, Little Crow's ability to restrain his people deteriorated.



Little Crow, ca. 1862

On August 4, 1862, about five hundred Dakota broke into the food warehouses at the Lower Sioux Agency. The agent in charge, [Thomas J. Galbraith](#), ordered defending troops not to shoot and called for a council. At the conference, Little Crow pointed out that the Dakota were owed the money to buy the food and warned that "When men are hungry, they help themselves." The Dakota complained, "This is our reservation, and yet you cut our grass for your animals. You cut down our trees for your building and your fire. You shoot our game, which we have very little of anyway. It's ours, you leave it alone. "

The representative of the traders, Andrew Myrick, replied, "So far as I am concerned, if they are hungry let them eat grass or their own dung." Within weeks, on August 17, 1862, a band of Dakota crossed paths with a group of white civilian settlers. The Dakota killed 5 of the white civilians and mutilated their bodies.

The tribe's need for food, and hatred for the white settlers led to the Dakota War of 1862. The Dakota first attacked Andrew Myrick's house; they killed him and stuffed his mouth with grass in revenge for his words. In spite of a number of victories, Little Crow's forces suffered a rout at the Battle of Wood Lake on September 23, 1862, and Little Crow was forced to flee to Canada

Deciding that the tribe must adopt a mobile existence, having been robbed of its territory, he returned to steal horses from his former land in Minnesota. On July 3 1863, while he and his son Wowinapa were foraging for berries a white settler shot and killed Little Crow and his son escaped. When the townspeople of Hutchinson, Minnesota discovered that the dead Dakota man was Little Crow, they mutilated and displayed the body. The settler received a standard bounty for the scalp of a Dakota, plus an additional \$500 bounty when it was discovered the remains were that of Little Crow. A small stone tablet sits at the roadside of the field where Little Crow was killed.

The Son of Saghalee Tyee

By Black Buffalo

Taken from the book "Seeds of Promise" as told at the Edinburgh '80 meeting by a Native American named Black Buffalo:

On the Northwest coast of the United States, a number of years ago, one missionary after another had come to a particular tribe of Indians, up the peninsula from Olympia and tried to share Jesus Christ, but the old chief would not let them come on the reservation. He said, "That's the white man's religion and the white man has brought us disease, mistrust, alcohol, and jail. We want no part of that." One missionary after another tried to share the message of Jesus Christ, and the chief would have them removed from the reservation. (A reservation is the Indian land that has been granted through treaty rights.)

One day a man came. He said to the old chief, "I want to tell you a story." Indians like stories. The old chief said, "What is the story?" The man said, "It is a story about Saghalee Tyee." Saghalee Tyee in our language literally means, "The God over all." And I like that one, too. The old chief looked at him and said, "Saghalee Tyee I know. I know all the stories, I teach the children. Never heard that Saghalee Tyee had a son. Maybe He could have a Son, tell me" This man in his wisdom began with the Creation. Almost all our Indian beliefs tell that the God of the sky, God over all, the one God, came down to earth and took from the earth and made man and that's why we call the earth, Mother Earth. That's why the Indians do not believe in cutting the forest, because they said, "Who has the right to cut our mothers hair?" This man told about God taking from the earth and making man, and the chief said, "Ah, I know." Then he moved quickly on into the flood, and how that God had made man, had watched man do so much badness, decided to get rid of them, brought the flood, but said He would never do it again after saving the one. And the old chief said, "Ah, I know." Almost all the Indian religions have a story of the flood. Then the man went on through and came to God looking once more and seeing that man was living bad, had done so many things wrong. God in His heart must have said, "How can I talk to them?" Then he said, "I know I will send my Son. He will talk to them and show them the things I want them to know." His Son came as a baby, and grew, and lived among the people and then told them what God wanted them to know. But some people did not like to hear what He said, and so they took Him and killed Him and they put Him in a cave. And they put a stone over the front of the cave, which was the same way these people buried. But He had said He would not stay there. They could kill Him but He would not stay dead. He would prove the resurrection, because He would come back to life, and in three days He did so! And He said whoever believed in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. The old chief looked at the man and said, "I believe, I believe Saghalee Tyee, who made the land, who made the mountains, who made the streams, and all the beauty that is in this world, I believe that Saghalee Tyee could have a Son but who is He? Tell me his name so that I will know who His son is." This man, looking at the chief, knew that when anyone said the name of Jesus, they were thrown off the reservation. This was the test. As he looked at the chief, he said, "His name is Jesus."

At that moment, tears began to run down the cheeks of the old chief, and he said, “No one ever told me that Jesus was the Son of Saghalee Tyee, and I have kept the Son of Saghalee Tyee from my people. Why didn’t anyone ever tell me that Jesus was the son of Saghalee Tyee?” That man went on to be one of our great Indian preachers, unable to read, yet a tremendous prayer warrior among our Indian people on the Northwest coast of Washington State.

What Does Syncretism Mean?

By Richard Twiss (excerpted from his booklet on syncretism)

What does syncretism mean? In the past twenty years the widespread concern about syncretism has become a divisive and hotly debated issue in Native North American ministry. While missiologists and church historians have been able to critically examine syncretism with “relative objectivity,” Native ministry leaders generally react with fear and opposition. Even though, in most cases, they have never seriously studied its meaning; it is simply taken to be synonymous with heresy (Starkloff 2002:12). Currently, this is especially true among many Native pastors and leaders of Native and/or reservation churches (and more so among the Caucasian pastor/missionary) who have not had the opportunity to engage with others in honest dialogue outside their denominational or organizational structures. Frequently, critical contextualization is mistaken for syncretism and consequently, the existing ineffective paradigms of church and missions among First Nations people have remained largely unchallenged.

I did not attempt to present a definitive statement concerning syncretism. I did, however, wrestle with the evolution and fluidity of definitions that scholars have used to try and capture the dynamic tension between making God’s story known in “language” that speaks to a particular audience; and in the process does not take away from the uniqueness of God in Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit in the earth. Though syncretism was not the focus of the paper, it is nonetheless, a critical component.

I am suggesting that, in the light of the writings of Alan Tippett, in *Christopaganism or Indigenous Christianity*, edited by Tetsunao Yamamori and Charles Tabor (1975), Dean Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament, Patterns for Theology and Mission* (2005), Scott Moreau, *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* (2000), Eunice Irwin, “The Status of Syncretism in Missiological Studies and a Modest Proposal for the 21st Century From the Perspective of Fourth World Peoples” (2006, Unpublished Paper) and Charles Stewart and Rosalind Shaw, *Syncretism/Anti-Syncretism, The Politics of Religious Synthesis* (1994), a viable, biblically valid view would be that syncretism is a normative stage in the process of spiritual and cultural transformation, not a fixed end-state (though it could be). Our current evangelical definitions have tended to view syncretism in terms of being a final product – static – the result of people mixing good and evil beliefs or practices.

Charles Kraft notes the question faced by Christian witnesses is, however, “whether any given undesirable state is but a step in a continuing process or whether the changes have virtually come to an end and the people are settled in their present beliefs and behavior” (Kraft 1996, 376). Is someone simply passing through on his or her journey, or have they decided to settle in and dwell there? Another consideration is that syncretism just means mixing, so the church is highly syncretistic and rightly so, since the gospel always gets inside culture (parable of the yeast and the dough, parable of the mustard seed, parable of the wheat and the tares). So, the questions are: is this a step or the end product? And, is this a kind of mixing that respects God and culture, or the kind of mixing that eliminates either

God (what most people mean by syncretism) or culture (what the conservatives end up doing).

Peter van der Veer suggests that the term syncretism refers to a “politics of difference and identity” and that as such the notion of power is crucial in its understanding. At stake is the power to identify true religion and to authorize some practices as ‘truthful’ and others as ‘false’ (van der Veer 1994, 196). Syncretism came to be used by defenders of “the true faith” as a protection against illicit contamination - a sign of religious decadence, betrayal of principles, or the corruption of the truth. What it attempted to do was establish itself as the single source of authentication (van der Veer 1996, 197).

True conversion, becoming conformed to the person of Jesus, is a gradual process of socio-cultural change or acculturation. It is not an evenly paced change, but varied, uneven, erratic, messy, unpredictable and fluctuating.

There does exist a legitimate concern about syncretism that I refer to as “negative syncretism,” that is, the rejection of the centrality of the Biblical, historical Jesus Christ as savior, redeemer, reconciler, sacrifice, provider, healer, intercessor, mediator, atoner, protector, etc. The rejection stems from an assumption that other religious beliefs / spiritual practices are equally dynamic in fulfilling God’s intended purposes for creation through Jesus. This syncretism flows out of uncritical religious pluralism. Because of this erroneous or misdirected assumption, negative syncretism is a blending or mixing of traditional non-Biblical religious beliefs with Christian faith, producing a differing hybridized and truncated gospel. To equate these beliefs as synonymous is syncretism because it takes away from the real message of communion - the redemptive death and resurrection of Christ.

Syncretism is problematic when it directs one's allegiance to other than Jesus Christ by reason of a person's participation in a new religious system - one created from the blend, which dilutes or redirects faith to someone/something other than Christ. Kraft (referencing the work of Alan Tippett) refers to this condition as “Christopagan Syncretism” (1996, 376). This occurs when people hear and adopt the stories of the bible in the foreign forms of the missionary, but interpret them in local ways, which might result in, as Kraft notes, “anything but Christianity” (1996, 376).

And so it is often today that church leaders who are “in control” in their respective positions of church polity often interpret new movements as in contradiction to “authentic” Christian faith, because it often flows outside the confines of their culturally informed and shaped traditions of Christianity; this is certainly true in Native ministry throughout North America. When rethinking and defining cultural adaptation as normative, an honest threatening fear of syncretism often surfaces, not because of a mistrust of the Word, but because of the long arm of mission history (Gilliland 1989,13).

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