



Dayspring Discipleship Institute

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“...the ministry of the Word” – Acts 6:4

Teaching – Equipping – Training – Ministering

Brenda Cox, Executive Director

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“...the Dayspring from on high has come to give light to those that sit in darkness...” --Luke 1:78-79

Newsletter

Dearhearts,

They called it “manifest destiny” – a phrase that ascribed to God the westward expansion of America. A phrase that ascribed Divine sanction to the conquest of the native tribes that had occupied the land for thousands of years and the destruction of their way of life. So in the name of Christianity the Indian wars were fought and tribes decimated and, eventually, the surviving tribes were consigned to diminutive parcels of land where their descendants live today.

Earlier, in *colonial* expansion, the name of God was spoken in a different language...through love and sacrificial service to native tribes...spoken by those like David Brainerd, the Methodists and Moravians. A great, Spirit-infused revival occurred among the Delaware Indians in the 1700’s as a result. The Cherokees were dramatically affected for a hundred years by the sacrificial devotion of Moravian and Methodist missionaries who walked the Trail of Tears with them from Tennessee to Oklahoma in the winter 1839. The legacy of this “Trail of Love” was an uncommon number of Cherokee pastors and Bible teachers, even scholars, which extended well into the 20th century.

Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce became a Christian through this same missionary language only to reject Christianity toward the end of his life because of the brutality of the enforcers of this “divine” edict of Manifest Destiny.

With the creation of reservations after the Civil War it was primarily Catholics who established missions and schools and who ministered in ways that endure to this day. But the legacy of the reservation system is that some are desolate places now and most are poverty bound. And the voice of Christ is subdued at best and distorted or suspect at worst. The memory of the vanquished is much sharper and longer than that of the victors. We get on with our lives...they do not. Having been stuck in a vortex of defeat, reminders of what we did in the name of God are not past, but present...at least for some of them.

Such is the case on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota.

I have recently returned from 6 days there to try to understand the needs and how we might minister there in ways that matter.* Though many Christians come and go in the summer – and have for years - the reservation languishes still. Languishes in the darkness of their own religion...or no religion at all. Languishes because fundamental systems are broken and seem beyond anyone’s reach to effect. Treaties guaranteeing health care and education quality to be equal to the rest of the country have been woefully dishonored, leaving a bureaucratic morass that consigns them to near third-world conditions.

It seems to me we have a debt to re-pay...and a Name to clear.

Though there are points of light in the summer, there is no enduring community of light...except for the Catholics. When the reservation was formed the Jesuits came to live among them. They live among them today. In the late 1800’s Chief Red Cloud asked them to build a school for his people. They did and it endures to this day as the shining educational light on the reservation. They, alone, are making a difference in an otherwise broken educational system. They have spoken the name of Christ in the language of love...and of promises kept.

But there are daunting challenges. There is need for more communities of light that don’t just show up once a year...though that is important. But we have a name to clear. The Lakota people need to see who Christ really is...need to know Him through our love and a presence that is faithful to their world and to living Christ out before them in a language they can understand and embrace. Only then can a people who live in a hopeless place find true hope, and only through His people will that ever be.

I love you,

*See pages 3 and 4 for extensive information on the needs and what we can do.

Can you Give Us a Hand in the Prayer Garden?



Please consider how you might be able to help with the prayer garden. Gay and Caroline and Teresa are losing the battle of the vines and flowers and planting.

The drought and heat of the last two years have taken a toll that continues to mount. Six of our largest trees have blown down in the past year. Additionally, a creeping “browning” of the star jasmine in Amy’s Garden including new “replacement” plants, plus the death of two Rose of Sharon trees flanking the same area has left us with a gardening riddle no one can seem to solve. Add to this our normal spring work and we have mounting expenses and labor requirements.

One of the causes for the dying plants in Amy’s Garden may be the amount of light it was suddenly exposed to when 4 large trees fell in the same storm. As we can, we will need to replace some of them with the largest trees we can afford. Any help you might be able to give to meet the challenges is blessing!

Saturdays in April are set for workdays so please let Gay Bostick or the ministry office know if you can give us a hand.

Saturday Meditations on Scripture April 20 8:30 – 11:45 a.m.

“Meditation is one of the ways in which the spiritual man keeps himself awake.” Thomas Merton

There is a need in every human soul to step out from the narrow confines of daily routine and seek that which is greater than we. This is particularly so for those of us who bear Christ’s name. Taking time to still our own impulses and clear the blur of our days, to focus on God’s Word in ways that change how we know Him is the opportunity these Saturday Meditations on His Word afford.

It is a matter not only of what is important, but what is urgent...and which of those we will choose.

We invite you to come the Saturday April 20 to experience the difference it can make in your day... and maybe even in your life.

This will be our last Meditation till fall. **Please Note the Date Change** from the 27th to the 20th.

Reflections on Easter Week

“This year’s Vesper service was the most beautiful and had the most profound impact on me than any I’ve ever attended. Your message and the quiet reflective communion time set the tone that ushered me into the true meaning of the Easter season of remembering Christ’s sacrifice for me. What a uniquely beautiful opportunity you give each year to worship our Lord in this way!!”

-- Caroline

This year’s Easter observances were a mix with the sunrise service experiencing the largest turnout ever with 39 attending while the Good Friday Observance saw by far the lowest attendance ever with six through the day until two more came for the closing focus at 6:00. Thursday Vesper Service also had the lowest attendance ever though the number was sufficient not to warrant re-evaluation at this time. But the limited interest in Good Friday’s observance does warrant a consideration of whether to offer it again.

Becky Elliston wrote of the day she spent at the chapel:

“I am so grateful for this opportunity to observe Good Friday at the chapel. There is nothing quite like the experience of that day – the silence, the stillness of time, the sacrifice of Christ! As I leave my prayer requests and details of my life at the door during the first moments, I enter to sit at the foot of the cross...to sit with Jesus. Tears flow as I meditate in silence with awe and gratitude. I can not take it in – His pain, His words of forgiveness, His love, His mercy, His sacrifice. I sit. I ponder. I trust. I thank my Savior, my Shepherd, my Lord, my King! As His amazing love flows down that cross into my heart, I am filled with unspeakable joy. He truly is the ‘bread of life,’ the ‘river of life,’ and He lives!”

Mission Outreach to Pine Ridge

What Brenda found on her trip to the Lakota Sioux Reservation in South Dakota was deep poverty, great hearts and several avenues available for us to extend the love of Christ to those who sit in a dark place economically, spiritually and emotionally. What we do hinges on your response. **Pages 3-4** carry Brenda’s report and some of the mission options available to us ...space does not allow us to cover them all. Enclosed is a Mission Interest Card for you to register your areas of interest.

There will be time on Tuesday evening April 16 to visit with Brenda in the Dayspring chapel and get more details, ask questions and view pictures.

Report From Pine Ridge

Each day, the 86 mile drive from Rapid City to the community of Pine Ridge took us into the reservation from the north where narrow arms of the Badlands National Park wrapped around the car and we passed large herds of antelope and mule deer. Houses dotted the rolling grasslands beyond. Sometimes scattered, sometimes in family clusters, the dwellings were either 1000 square foot cookie-cutter houses or trailers... occupied or abandoned. Multiple cars told us which ones held 2 or 3 families.

The reservation covers about 9,000 square miles of sprawling South Dakota prairie land interspersed by the Badlands toward the north and a more timbered area on the southern sector. The size of Connecticut, it is the second largest Indian reservation in the nation. 42,000 Lakota Sioux - descendants of Crazy Horse, Red Cloud and Black Elk - live here. 20,000 of these are children under the age of 19. All the adults I spoke with have a faint but distinctive accent. English is their second language.

With just over 3,000 people Pine Ridge is the largest town on the reservation. It is

there – and in Kyle 40 miles to the northeast – that I met some wonderful men and women, all Lakota Sioux, who are pouring themselves out sacrificially to try to help their people and to change a culture of dependency and bureaucracy that seems both intractable and life-draining. The word I heard most from these good people was “hopelessness.”

It is the hopelessness of 80% unemployment. Businesses are scarce and industry non-existent. If Pine Ridge were a country, it would be second only to Haiti in the western hemisphere in per capita income. Though figures vary somewhat, the median per capita income is around \$4,000 **per year**. One organization that offers home repair and small construction assistance received 96 requests last year for out-houses. They were able to build 34. In the towns there is indoor plumbing but in the countryside, there often is not even running water.

It is the hopelessness of rampant alcoholism. The director of the only substance abuse center on the reservation estimated over 50% of adults are alcoholics

even though the sale of alcohol on the reservation is illegal. The center has a housing capacity for 10 youths from ages 12-17 but only has personnel to handle seven. There is a waiting list of 100.



It is the hopelessness of physical and sexual abuse of children. C.A.S.A., a national child advocacy organization, has an office in Pine Ridge with a paid staff of two: a director/case worker and another full-time case worker. As an advocate for abused children, C.A.S.A. works with the worst cases... those that have actually made it into the legal system. Arlanna and Larry have 130 active cases with another 785 open cases. One thousand more cases

are “in the system”...over 2,000 severe cases of abuse in a population of 20,000 kids! And only two case workers. When asked how she kept from getting over-whelmed, she answered, “I don’t. I’m over-whelmed all the time. It’s the kids that keep me going. Who would be there for the kids if I leave?”

Last year Arlanna was overjoyed when 20 people came to be trained as volunteer advocates. Ultimately, only 2 or 3 were actually able to advocate because the rest did not have money for gas to drive the sometimes 200 mile roundtrip to meet with the children.

It is the hopelessness of bureaucratic logjams. By treaty, healthcare and education were to be of equal quality on the reservation as in the rest of the country. These two areas are under federal agencies within the Department of Interior and have been chronically under-funded...especially health...and especially in recent years. Yet, by law, the public can’t make donations to federal agencies to make up the difference. Bureaucracy has institutionalized hopelessness. With no way to fix the problems, these areas teeter perilously close to third world status. So the life expectancy of women is 52, for men 47. Only 1/3 of students graduating from reservation schools qualify for college and only 1/3 of those go on to graduate.

Background checks for new teachers must go through the Bureau of Indian Education. It takes 6 months to a year to process...by then, prospective teachers are gone. So in a school where 88% of the freshmen two years ago were in varying stages of depression the school counselor is conscripted to teach English.

They are caught in a snare that makes it seemingly impossible for this nation of once free and noble people to turn things around on their own. If someone from outside doesn’t add to the resources of those working from within, they will languish in a mire where those who can will leave and the Sioux as a nation will fade into extinction.

But there are some things we can do...



Options for Mission Outreach

What We Can Do

We can work in supportive and collaborative ways with the school and other on-site organizations that seek to help their people become self-sufficient, help youth and children and seek to tackle the most fundamental challenges facing the people on the reservation. We hope to send teams of men and women who can teach new skills such as home repairs, cake decorating, jewelry-making, sewing, woodworking etc. We can also support by donating supplies and materials or money to a special fund.

The following organizations seem to offer the greatest versatility for ministry both from here and on the ground there and whose integrity seems high and valued by other organizations there. All are staffed and headed by Lakota Sioux.

Partnership for Housing

Non-profit, the director is Catholic and works closely with faith-based groups. Because housing is the most pressing need on the reservation they offer monthly classes for budgeting and financial responsibility to help people clean up their credit and qualify for a home loan. Classes are also offered for income-producing skills of every sort. They provide home repairs and have a tool pool for people to use for their own repairs.

What we can do.

- **Teaching/Training Teams**

One group came up from a "Baptist seminary" and while the men did home repairs, the women taught sewing. When they departed they left the sewing machines with the ladies who had attended.

Another group of wives taught cake decorating. From that, two native women started their own home cake decorating business and now supply special event cakes from and for the reservation.

- **Home Repair Teams Needed:**

May: significant home repair

August: winterizing homes

- **Donating Supplies/Materials** such as Tools/ Sewing supplies/ old beads and jewelry, etc.

- **Sponsoring Monthly Training Seminars:** \$300.00 covers expenses for speaker and refreshments. **Pick a Month to Sponsor**

We also want to Donate to these, and other organizations, shoes (from babies to teens), good clothing, blankets and winter coats.

C.A.S.A

Shell Gas Gift Cards/Visa Gift Cards for use by Child Advocate Volunteers for travel. You may also donate with a designated check to Dayspring and we will convert to \$100 gift cards.

Visa Gift Card (or designated check to Dayspring) for furnishing a room for children to tell their story of abuse in a safe, private place. *They had no place for that when I was there but were getting a room cleared for that purpose.* Need is for full size sofa, two chairs, end table/coffee table, lamps.

Pine Ridge School

The high school is open to our using their facility for the workshops/classes (mentioned earlier) in the summer or for students after school in the fall. Funds are not available for normal teacher professional development nor for summer camps for their athletic teams, nor for their band. The kids love music and they have a strong band director but few instruments. Twenty kids, for example want to play flute, but there is only one flute. What instruments they have are old military band instruments. We are exploring ways to address some or all of these needs.

Almost without effort, things are falling into place for offering professional development for teachers this summer as well as a volley ball camp for their girls' team.

We are going to try to work through their parent leadership (since we can't make direct donations) to help with areas such as band needs and other supplies. Who knows? Maybe some instruments will show up one day.

Infusion Fund?

Though I don't normally favor funds, a fund seems in order here. Even a small fund could perhaps help with stipends for C.A.S.A. volunteers or to those who use their home repair skills (learned in our classes) to help their neighbors.

Learning a skill that has limited or no financial compensation for work done discourages self-sufficiency.

Such stipends would encourage skill development and would also infuse some money into the local economy. Whether this fund happens depends on how you feel led.

To Find out More

**Come Tuesday Evening
April 16 at 7:00 to the Chapel**

**See Slides, Ask Questions, Get More Details Not
Included in this Newsletter**