

Indian Uprising

Vincent Yellow Old Woman, Tom Black Eagle, Kenneth Pretty On Top, Gabe Medicine Eagle, Jerry Yellowhawk: names of long-gone Native American chiefs? No, they are a few of the courageous Native leaders who have for decades been serving Jesus among their people in North America. They also represent an emerging Native voice in the body of Christ.

In modern missions, no other people group is so uniquely positioned for world evangelism as First Nations people. Native Americans visiting any country of the world are immediately welcomed as special guests and treated with great respect. This presents a remarkable evangelistic opportunity.

However, for this to be fulfilled, stereotypes and misunderstandings in the church today about Native people must be removed. These include: Natives are on welfare; they receive big casino checks; they are poor, unmotivated and lack ambition; they have alcohol and abuse problems.

Yet the most crippling stereotype is the view that casts Native people as the “forgotten mission field”—a people still in great need of being reached with the gospel and forever in need of assistance and ministry by their Euro-American brothers and sisters. I believe the Spirit of God is challenging these misinformed and erroneous perceptions so that Native Americans can at last find their rightful place as co-equals with all Christians in Christ’s purposes for the nations.

Recently I led a Native American ministry team to Switzerland, Germany and France. We gave 25 ministry and cultural presentations in 19 days, in 13 cities. We danced, drummed and shared Christ in venues that included the World Expo, the International Children's Festival, public schools, village community centers and many churches. On our team were Apache and Lakota pastors, a Pomo evangelist, an Ojibway elder and minister of 45 years, a Cherokee dancer, and a Mohawk worship leader.

At a park on Lake Geneva, in Switzerland, thousands of people were enjoying the sunshine. We dressed in regalia, set up our drums and did a dance presentation in the middle of a large grassy area.

In minutes, more than 350 people gathered around us. At the conclusion Pomo evangelist Ed LaRose gave an invitation, and 45 children came forward to pray and accept Jesus as Savior.

During a refugee outreach in Lausanne, more than 150 refugees from African, Latin American, Middle Eastern and Asian countries attended. After our message 41 people came forward to pray for the first time to receive Jesus.

Last year I led a team to China. Again we danced, drummed and shared Christ through our cultural expressions. Though we were prohibited by Chinese authorities to proclaim Jesus openly, the Spirit of God touched Chinese people.

One Chinese interpreter said to us, "Other performers good, but Indians—you are the best." This was a significant compliment because more than 200 professional artists and performers from 20 countries participated in the festival.

Ed LaRose has preached the gospel in 32 countries. Carrier/Sekani Honorary Grand Chief Lynda Prince has directed a team of Native believers in leading the Feast of Tabernacles march in Jerusalem and drummed and sang in the Israeli Knesset the last two years. Terry LeBlanc of Mi'Kmaq/Acadian ancestry led a Native team who drummed and shared Christ among the Masi people of Tanzania.

On the global scene, the Spirit of God is using Native believers and their cultural expressions of drumming, dance, music and regalia to open the hearts of people to receive the gospel.

Do you see Native people as the mission field or as co-equal partners in reaching the nations for Jesus? Here is a community of believers poised for world mission, looking to partner with people to take advantage of this global opportunity.

My brothers and sisters, what can you do to partner with Native leaders to reach the nations through the bridge of their cultural expressions with the gospel of Jesus Christ?

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