



Our series has been entitled 'Stepping Out' and we have been talking about what it means to 'Reach Out and Touch our World'. We have looked about how to care for our Neighbours and are presently looking at what it means to care for those in our Community. One part of our community that we can easily overlook is those who are of First Nations background. So today we want to stop and talk about caring for our Native neighbours. To help us do that I have asked a guest to join us.

Today I have asked a man, who some of you know (and is still a member of Brentview Baptist Church) to join us. His name is Roger Boyer II. He met his wife, Tami here at church and they have a 6 year old foster child named Noah. Roger's father is a First Nations man from Ontario and his mother is from the United States of America. He is a football player, who was saved and then came to Calgary to work with Athletes in Action at the University of Calgary and came to Brentview, sang in the choir, was part of the Epic ministry and became a friend. Then he felt God's call to go to work with Native kids on the Morley Reserve (the Reserve you drive through on Highway #1 on the way to Kananaskis and Canmore). He has served there for 5 ½ years and is presently working on his PhD from Asbury Seminary with a specialty in Intercultural studies. Vincent and Vanessa YellowOldWomen are his mentors and are joining us here this morning as well.

Exchange of Peace and Gifts

As we begin, let me tell you why this is such an important topic to me. As many of you know, I moved to a town near Jasper called Grand Cache when I was in grade 10. One of my best friends was a Native kid named Blake; we hunted, fished and trapped together. The native population of Grand Cache used to live in what is now Jasper Park National Park. When it became a park they were forced to move to the Grand Cache area, they did well until the coal mine was established there. When we arrived, the town was brand new and the Native population was very healthy. And because of a few native friends, I had a chance to get to know and enjoy many of the Native folks; some of them had Native names like Delorm, McDonald, etc. but some still had the names like Winniadié. The sad thing was to watch these proud, generous people change due to the influence of alcohol and curse of the 500 single men's trailer camp, etc. I watched some managed well with this white invasion but a huge number of people were destroyed in the process, including some of my very good friends.

Statistics:

- In Alberta, we have 3.2 million people. 189,000 are Native and 80,000 of them are under the age of 18.
- The Native population is the fastest growing population in Canada. 40% live on Reserves and 60% live off the Reserves (approximately 25,000 in Calgary).
- Right around Calgary we have the Morely Reserve to the west, Siksika to the East and Tsuu T'ina to the South. The Blood Reserve is near Carstairs.

Scripture:

Let me put this morning's discussion in the context of the Word of God. Two simple Scriptures need to surround our discussion this morning:

1. Matthew 25:31 – 40. We are called to care for those who have needs around us.

In this passage, Jesus points to the future when we as believers will stand before him and give account of how we have lived our lives. Jesus says there will be a time when we will be rewarded and called to give an account for how we have lived our lives. Notice, that people from all nations will gather together around the throne of God. What a great promise! People from the nations of England, Germany, China as well as our First Nations brothers and sisters from Tsuu T'ina and Morley will be there standing around the throne of Jesus and meeting our Father God. Then it says that all of us will be judged on how we have stood with those who are weak, those who have lived on the margins and those who have struggled in life. Notice that the king could point to those in the groups who had cared for people who had needs and had lost their way and that the care was as practical as running a food bank, offering clothes when needed and a shelter for those left out in the cold. By caring for them, we are actually caring for Jesus himself. Here Jesus says, *"Let me show you my heart and let me tell you the truth. I expect that, as you follow me, your faith must lead you to being involved with those who are struggling to find their way."*

2. Philippians 1:1 – 6. We are called to stand with those who are making a difference.

Often in the New Testament we find Paul writing to friends who have stood with him as he has ministered to others. In Philippians 1:1 – 6, Paul is saying that as he has been ministering to others, they have, out of their strength and care for him, (as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus), stood along side of him as he has preached, taught and been involved in making an eternal difference in people's lives. He was saying, *"Thank you for standing beside me."* Not only has he needed their help, but as they stood beside him like Vincent & Vanessa YellowOldWomen have stood beside Roger and Tami; they have been key players in his ministry. They have helped Roger and many other strong Native brothers and sisters be able to minister in strength, knowing that they are not alone.

That is a key reason why we want to meet today; not only to say that they are not alone but to ask how we can make a difference in their lives for their people sake as they and their people are our neighbours and family in Christ. So we are here to learn what we need to know concerning how to care for those who are strong and weak within our First Nations neighbours. We are also going to learn how to hold up the arms and hearts of fellow believers who are making a difference in their communities.

Questions for Roger Boyer II:

1. Strange question for you Roger, do First Nations people like to be called Indian, First Nations or Aboriginal?

2. You have heard the comment, we know that there have been some terrible things happen historically to Native folk but why can't Native folks just get over their past and move on?

Roger Boyer II to Share:

I. Historical Narrative

- A. Immigrants
- B. AA: Assimilation and Abuse
- C. IRS: Indian Residential Schools
- D. Treaty 7

Question # 3: From your view, what is our call as Christians when it comes to our Native brothers and sisters?

II. Power of Partnership "Love your Neighbour"

- A. Listen
- B. Learn
- C. Reconcile: Hand Heart Head
- D. Walk together: PEACE

III. Hand Up not Hand Out (Training)

- A. Availability
- B. Vulnerability
- C. Engagement
- D. Focal Point: June 21, 2008 Apology.

IV. Love: Give/Time "Matthew 24

- A. What's Love Got to Do with It?
- B. "I love First Nations / Indian
- C. Ideology of Love means Agree?
- D. Love Lessens our Mission Commitment (Weaker Vessel)

Conclusion: Rite of Passage

Do you know the legend of the Cherokee Indian youth's rite of Passage? His father takes him into the forest, blindfolds him and leaves him alone. He is required to sit on a stump the whole night and not remove the blindfold until the rays of the morning sun shine through it. He cannot cry out for help to anyone. Once he survives the night, he is a MAN.

He cannot tell the other boys of this experience, because each lad must come into manhood on his own. The boy is naturally terrified. He can hear all kinds of noises. Wild beasts must surely be all around him. Maybe even some human might do him harm. The wind blew the grass and earth, and shook his stump, but he sat stoically, never removing the blindfold. It would be the only way he could become a man!

Finally, after a horrific night the sun appeared and he removed his blindfold. It was then that he discovered his father sitting on the stump next to him. He had been at watch the entire night, protecting his son from harm. We, too, are never alone. Even when we don't know it, God is watching over us, sitting on the stump beside us. When trouble comes, all we have to do is reach out to Him. If you liked this story, pass it on. If not, you took off your blindfold before dawn.

Extra Information:

Interesting Similarities between Native and Christian way of thinking:

Did you know that Christianity (because Christianity is a middle-Eastern religion) and Native Culture have so much in common? For example:

- i) A key value is relationship – both put a high value on connection through relationship.
- ii) Often Jesus used 'story telling' – narratives to make his points. The Native story circle mirrors this idea.
- iii) Ceremony and symbolism are key factors of faith. For example every part of the Tabernacle had a meaning beyond what you saw at first glance. (i.e: the incense burning in the temple was a sweet smell of worship and connection with their God. The native culture does the same thing with Sweet Grass ceremony.
- iv) Respect for Elders and tradition

Here are some books that could be helpful in understanding First Nations:

1. God is Red by Vine Deloria Jr.
2. Custer Died for Your Sins by Vine Deloria
3. When Going to Church was Sin by Randy Woodley
4. Native and Christian by James Treat
5. The Pipe and Christ by William Stolzman
6. Mission among the Blackfeet by Howard Harrod

More Statistics:

<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/analysis/aboriginal/fewer.cfm>

<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/Products/Analytic/companion/abor/canada.cfm>

<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/calgary/story/2008/01/15/aboriginal-cgy-census.html>

UNDERSTANDING OF TREATY RIGHTS AND THE TREATY:

<http://www.treaty7.org/ArticlesofTreatyNo7.aspx>

HISTORY OF THE FIRST NATIONS:

TSUU TINA: <http://www.tsuutina.ca>

BEARSPAW, CHINIKI, AND WESLEY(STONEY): www.stoney-nation.com

SIKSIKA: <http://www.siksikanation.com>

BLOOD: <http://www.bloodtribe.org/main.html>

PIEGAN: <http://www2.anglican.ca/rs/history/schools/st-cyprian-brockel.htm>

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