

Living His Word Ministries - Trip Report

*Cheyenne River Indian Reservation, Eagle Butte, SD
September 22 – October 4, 2011*

First I would like to thank all of you for your donations of books, clothing, blankets, food, and survival shoe boxes; for your support to get me to the reservation; and for your prayers throughout the trip. It is truly a blessing to have a support network of people who care about God's work in the world. I know He will bless all of you for your involvement.



22 Sep 11: As I left for the reservation, the truck was stuffed to the max with food, blankets, clothing, school supplies, Amazing Grace books, and the Living His Word – The Next Step Books. On the bottom was the wood to build two Crosses at the church (one inside and one outside) and do other miscellaneous home repairs.

In addition, Leadership folders were created to give to those who are reaching out to others. The folders included the leadership articles from the website, a discipleship article, the Path to Peace Native American article, Amazing Grace book, Living His Word – The Next Step book, and the index for all the Living His Word articles. Hopefully the folders will be a useful tool to help disciple others and prepare future leaders.

This became a long day driving because I-29 was closed in two different places from flooding, causing a 55 mile detour and an extra hour of driving time.



23 Sep 11: Today the Lord gave me relief with an uneventful drive for the rest of the trip. I arrived at the reservation, met with Pastor Laplante, and we unloaded most of the larger (institutional size) cans of food at the Episcopal Church kitchen. Twice a week the church feeds from 80-100 people in need. They were very low on food and what we delivered was a huge blessing. They use a lot of corn, green beans, pork & beans, and pudding in the large cans.

We then went to the home of one of his church members that was needing the bathroom floor repaired, a sink faucet installed, the kitchen drain repaired, and a new water heater put in. The home was in deteriorating condition and they had been going without hot water since May. We then went to purchase the parts we needed for the plumbing repairs.

Next, we headed to the Culture Center to unload the rest of the food, the clothing and school supplies for an outreach on Sunday after the church service.

I then went to the Tribal office to meet with one of the ladies doing outreach. I left her with some copies of the Amazing Grace and Living His Word books, as well as, a Leadership folder.





To end the evening, I went to what turned out to be a powerful prayer meeting, at Sister Elizabeth's home, with several people from different churches. In John 17:20-23, Jesus prayed that all believers would be brought to complete unity so that others would believe His message through us. This is the beginning of a long overdue gathering of believers united toward one purpose – to reach the reservation for Christ. We must continue to pray that the shepherds of God's flocks will also recognize the importance of working together with other denominations. Satan's walls of disunity must be torn down, rather than helping him make repairs.

24 Sep 11: Today I went to Pastor Addie's church to work on the two Crosses. First I dug a 3' hole up against the building. Then I put an 8' - 4 x 4 post in the ground with concrete. The Cross, 8' tall - 4" x 6" treated wood, was then anchored to the post and stained brown to contrast with the white building.



For the inside Cross, I used 1 x 6s to build an 8' tall – 4" x 6" box type Cross. It was then mounted to the center of the wall in the sanctuary near the top of the slightly vaulted ceiling. I used some wood blocks to hold it off the wall so lights could be put behind it.

I ended the day with a peaceful viewing of God's beautiful sunset.



25 Sep 11: Today I attended an early house church meeting at Sister Elizabeth's home with the other Christians who were at the prayer meeting two days earlier. I then went to the church service at New Life Church. We set up the food, clothing, blankets, books, and school supplies **you donated** for distribution to the members in need. Pastor Daniel shared a great message and we then had food and fellowship afterwards. Everyone then gathered the items they needed and also took some to distribute to others in the community who were in need. Everything provided an outreach and service opportunity for those in the church.



Later I went to look at another service project for the week. Pastor Daniel's wife, Tess, has been developing a horse shelter for those with injuries, health, and starvation problems. She has been building a shelter to protect the horses during the harsh winter using materials found at the local dump. She is close to being finished to accommodate the horses being treated, but needs to complete the roof in several sections. She has metal roofing on hand, but needs to complete the framing. Sister Elizabeth and her group would like to assist with the project and also help as the horse care facility becomes an outreach tool for the local youth. The plan is to involve them in the care, feeding, and treatment of horses and mentor them spiritually. There is a huge need with the youth for mentorship, developing self esteem, and helping them discover God's purpose for their lives. I spent some time framing and getting things prepared for the group the next day.



A flock of about 25 turkeys passed by while I was at the horse shelter. They paused to eat with the horses and then moved on.

26 Sep 11: I began the day with a trip to Dupree to pick up a few more 2 x 4s to finish the framing and then headed toward Green Grass to meet the group and work on the horse shelter. Tess was there and Pastor Daniel brought Randy (brother-in-law) and Kevin (friend from North Carolina) to help as well. We all worked on finishing the framing (no power for tools) and then started putting up the metal roofing. The roofing was a mixture of lengths, colors and styles. But we put it all up and had enough to enclose the shelter.

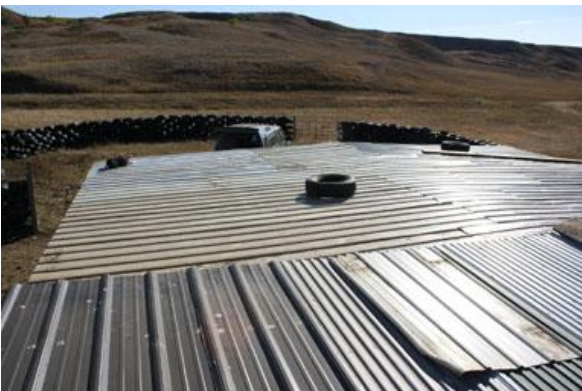
Sister Elizabeth brought lunch for everyone and we enjoyed some peaceful fellowship sitting on hay bales in the middle of God's beautiful scenery. By the way, earlier when I was measuring for the framing, I felt something gently press up against me. I turned around and the one month old colt was standing there like a big puppy dog wanting his ears scratched. The turkeys came strolling through again too.



27 Sep 11: I started the day with a trip to the Episcopal church soup kitchen to leave some of the Amazing Grace and Living His Word books and talk with the volunteers. Pastor Daniel and his sister were distributing some of the food you donated to needy families in the area. Then Pastor Daniel and I met at the elder's home to do the plumbing repairs we looked at earlier in the week. We had to remove the toilet and half of the floor due to water damage. Water was still leaking from the shower faucet, so we had to open the wall and replace the shower valve to stop further damage. We then replaced the floor and reinstalled the toilet which had also been leaking at the base. Next, we had to put a sink faucet on and hook up the sink which had no drain pipe either. Once we finished, they had three plumbing fixtures working and without any leaks.

Last, we replaced the kitchen sink drain which was also leaking and on the opposite side of the same wall as the bathroom. This added to the floor damage. This whole process only required four trips back and forth to the plumbing supply store. To complete this project, tomorrow Daniel and I will install a new water heater the homeowner already had, but was unable to get hooked up. They have been taking cold showers for a long time.

During one of our trips to the plumbing store, we dropped off the rest of the large cans of food to another soup kitchen operated by the people at the library.



28 Sep 11: Today Daniel and I installed the new water heater while Kevin and Randy worked on peel and stick tile for the bathroom. Some of the old floor areas were still damp so I will finish the tile tomorrow. After a late lunch, Randy and I repaired a small section of roof that had the shingles blown off, built a wooden step to replace two concrete blocks being used as a step and then to a third home to install a grab bar in the



bathroom. All of these projects were done for the elderly who own their homes and receive no housing maintenance assistance from the tribe. Randy and Kevin had gone fishing yesterday, so tonight we had a fish fry to end the day. Mighty tasty!



29 Sep 11: I started the day with a trip to Abe's to finish the tile in the bathroom and install a grab bar. I then headed to the horse shelter to build a storage room for the feed, blankets, and tools. They have had to transport everything back and forth in the winter. My helpers had to take a trip to Rapid City so I worked by myself. The horses did what they could, but mostly they followed me around, curious as to what was going on. The little guy from the other days stays glued to my hip pocket. I was able to put together an 8' x 8' room using scrap lumber, scrap plywood, an old door, and an old window. Did I mention I worked with no power tools again (this back to nature stuff is a challenge). It had been a long time since I cut 8' sheets of plywood with a handsaw. Everything came out better than I thought. Thank you Lord!

The day was very peaceful and quiet again (other than the noise I made). I saw 12 antelope in a field on the way to the shelter earlier in the day, and another beautiful sunset tonight.



30 Sep 11: Today was mostly a visiting day to meet with Bryce, Lacey, Robin and the new Tribal Council Chairman at the tribal office. They are hopeful to get funding for one of the cabin projects that we can build as a sample for a needy family. I also met with Sister Elizabeth again to hear the results of her trip to Sturgis. She is working to get other groups involved on the reservation using their different gifts and services.

Later, Randy and I did some more roof repair to anchor down some metal fascia that was blowing in the wind and one long piece that was missing. Then Daniel, Randy, Kevin and I headed to the On The Trees church to see what could be done about hooking up the furnace ducting. It turned out there was no furnace, just an old rusted wood stove with a hole in the side. No flue was there between the stove and the ceiling. The stove was too unsafe to use anyway, so they will have to consider some different options for heating.



As evening came, we all headed to the Baptist church to talk with them about their Friday night youth outreach so see who they were reaching and get some other ideas. We talked with them for quite some time. They did dinner and movies, with games and play time in the yard. They said they averaged around 15 children below the age of 12. Once the kids get beyond age 12, they start to drift away for various reasons. There is a lack of male leaders for mentorship, so Daniel and Randy volunteered to come over on Friday night to help. Here is another example of people with different religious backgrounds coming together with one purpose for Christ. We desperately need prayer to bring forth and re-engage the men of the community.



There is a section of main street called “The Wall” where the older teens meet and congregate. Our goal was to talk with some of them to get their ideas on what they would like to see for events, activities and a teen center. But we also wanted to hear their concerns and problems with regard to the social and cultural issues. We did a test with about three older teens (one 20 yr old) and they were very frustrated and bitter about the homelessness and lack of direction by their previous generation that was filtering down to them. The one older boy just wanted to leave.

We will try again tomorrow night and bring some food. Pastor Dan wants to start developing relationships with them so they will open up and get involved, hopefully even starting a youth council that will bring their concerns to the Tribal Council.



1 Oct 11: Today began with a trip to the community of Green Grass with Sister Elizabeth and Tess to see the UCC Church and Sun Dance area. This is an area where tribes and people from all over the world come to participate in the Sun Dance and visit because the last keeper of the sacred pipe and bowl lives here. The UCC Church is right in the middle of this community, but sits empty, without a pastor. Tess would like to use the building to start a sewing circle with the women in the community to bring them together and see where the conversation leads.

There is a lot of interesting history with the Sun Dance area and ceremony. The tribe uses it as a way to lift up their prayer needs to God. The tree is full of prayer ties, little bundles hanging in the tree and around the tree to represent the individual prayer needs of the people. Those who participate in the ceremony go through a purification time and four days of fasting so they are as pure as possible before approaching God. They dance in the direction of the sun as they offer their prayers to God. Many who participate have seen visions of the image of Jesus hanging on the tree. Jesus will make himself known to people in unique ways through their cultural. *“After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands”* (Rev 7:9).



I then returned to stain the inside Cross at Sister Addie’s church, fill the nail holes and re-secure it to the wall. Next I went to Pastor Dan’s to build a Cross form that could be used to fill with concrete and make headstones for at least six unmarked graves in the cemetery by the On The Trees Church. Here is another example of how many different things need attention, and how many things add to the burden of families.



As evening came on, we picked up some food to make for the teen outreach at “The Wall.” After dark, we took sloppy joes, macaroni salad, and Kool-Aid to the wall and set up outside the van. It was slow at first getting the kids involved so we started



making plates and taking the food to them as they sat on the wall. They seemed surprised that anyone would come to them, and also that we would serve them. As the night went on they became more comfortable and started coming for food. Pastor Dan shared with them his idea to seek their opinions and involve them in a youth council. They asked where he was from and he shared about the church and when it met. Many seemed open to talk and others were quiet. Overall though, it turned out to be a great start to build a relationship with them and show them that someone cares about their concerns. We ended up serving over 50 kids with food. Dan and Randy plan to make the wall a regular outreach to talk about concerns and bring them closer to Christ.

2 Oct 11: Today I went to the New Life Church for services. I spoke with Pastor Daniel to discuss needs and plans. He said there is always a need for food as many people struggle with the necessities of life. Different kinds of vegetables, potatoes, and noodles are always good items to bring. Tomatoes are still a favorite. The hygiene kits we put together went over very well and were distributed quickly. These will continue to be a needed item. Pastor Daniel would also like to start a program to get new winter coats to distribute to not only meet needs, but to continue to reach out. Coats for babies and young children are always in short supply.

Pastor Daniel preached powerful messages on both weekends I was here. Getting involved in serving others and separating us from a selfish world system were the main points of his messages. After prayer for individual needs there was a fellowship meal. Several people in need, off the street, came in to hear his messages and join in the meal.

Later I met with Sister Elizabeth and her group one more time. We had another excellent time of fellowship and prayer. These are the prayer warriors that stand in the gap on the front lines of the spiritual war here. They need our prayers.

Final thoughts:

Tomorrow I will start the trip back. Everything that was brought up with me was distributed to the needy. A lot of home repairs were done and needs met. It has been another successful trip, as that goes. But there is also a mixture of powerful emotions for the good things to come and for the hardships that remain. So much healing and hurt needs to be dealt with. So much hopelessness and despair needs to be overcome. I have felt an intense burden from our first prayer meeting through the last. The time here has been indescribable with the intensity, sensitivity, and awareness of the presence of God that is here and working. The parallels between the culture, God and our own lives are amazing as God removes the scales from my eyes.

Last night, God woke me in the middle of the night, for several hours, beginning with the words "Broken Heart" (Cante (Chan-Day) Mahza in Lakota (Lak-Hota) or Cante Wegahé (Way-



ghahay)) There are so many broken hearts here. And he has been breaking mine for them. He brought to mind the prayer ties I had seen hanging there. I wondered, this was just one tree full of so many prayer ties, how many more unwritten prayers were waiting to be heard and answered. He then brought to mind the first part of an Indian poem I had not heard in over ten years. The beginning is: *“In a past, that is now lost forever, there was a time when the land was sacred and the ancient ones were as one with it. A time when only the children of the Great Spirit were here to light their fires in these places without boundaries.”* It made me think of how the past could not be changed and how tomorrow, today will be the past. What will we do with it to make a difference with our lives? And what will we do to help the First Americans make a difference in theirs? Again I thought of the prayer ties. They are tied to the tree that is laying down. Jesus was tied to the tree, laying down, before He was pierced. The tree is then stood up into a hole in the ground. The Cross of Christ was stood up into a hole in the ground. The tree has a long red sash that is wrapped and flows down the tree, much like the blood of Jesus flowed for us. How could God not reveal Himself there?

Please pray and keep praying. God is working here! Things are beginning to happen, but much more needs to be done. This generation needs to be reached to turn the tide. Leaders, mentors and role models need to be raised to point the people to Jesus and then stand with the new believers to disciple them. There is a huge gap, a void, that needs to be filled. I had to search the internet to find the rest of the Indian poem:

One time the wind blew free and there was nothing to break the light of the sun.

In a past that is now lost forever

There was a time when the land was sacred, and the ancient ones were as one with it.

A time when only the children of the Great Spirit were here, to light their fires in these places with no boundaries.

When the forests were as thick as the fur of the winter bear and a warrior could walk

from horizon to horizon on the backs of the buffalo.

And during that time when there were only simple ways, I saw with my heart the conflicts to come.

And whether it was to be for good or bad, what was certain was that there would be change.

Wayakin (The Guardian Spirit of the Nez Perce)

It was a special time; a peaceful time, a time when there were only simple ways.

The change has come. We can't restore the past. We can't undo what's been done.

But, we can change the future. We can draw from the simple ways. We can draw close now.

Through our prayers, for all the hurts and needs we don't know;
And for those we do know; One *prayer tie* at a time; one knot,
one person, one life.



One day, one day, and on that glorious day; Our hearts will melt
like wax before the Lord;
The wounds will be closed; the brokenness will be lifted;
The hurts will be healed; the prayers will be answered;
And we will be united as one in eternity!

*The LORD reigns, let the earth be glad; let the distant shores
rejoice. Clouds and thick darkness surround him; righteousness
and justice are the foundation of his throne. Fire goes before
him and consumes his foes on every side. His lightning lights up
the world; the earth sees and trembles. The mountains melt like
wax before the LORD, before the Lord of all the earth. The
heavens proclaim his righteousness, and all peoples will see his
glory” (Ps 97:1-6).*

Thank you **all** again for your support! Everything was well
received, much appreciated and desperately needed.

Many continued blessings,

Jim

