

*Ashley Down Mission*  
**NEWSLETTER**

March 18, 2020

# Magnifying the worth of Christ to the Lakota in the midst of global unrest.



*Unified prayer meeting in Pine Ridge at Hands of Faith, White Clay, NE.*

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Greetings to you all in Jesus' name! A couple weeks ago I met an elderly man named Bob at a men's retreat in the Black Hills. Bob is a successful businessman nearing retirement age and had been planning a trip to Indonesia to share the gospel. Then the Coronavirus hit. You can imagine that most people would have cancelled their plans to travel if the government already hadn't...but not Bob. Citing the example of the Apostle Paul in Acts 21, where Paul was warned not to go to Jerusalem because of pending physical harm, Paul stated he was not only prepared to go and suffer, but felt compelled to do so. Bob's reasoning was that God is sovereign over the coronavirus and therefore he trusted God fully in the matter. That was a beautiful thing for me to see and a great example of who I want to become. It reminded me of something I read in John Piper's book, Risk is Right (which I highly recommend):

*“There are a thousand ways to magnify Christ in life and death. None should be scorned. All are important. But none makes the worth of Christ shine more brightly than sacrificial love for other people in the name of Jesus. If Christ is so valuable that the hope of his immediate and eternal fellowship after death frees us from the self-serving fear of dying and enables us to lay down our lives for the good of others, such love magnifies the glory of Christ like nothing else in the world.”*

I know some of you may be wondering how the coronavirus has affected things down at Pine Ridge. Recently, the Pine Ridge Tribal President issued a declaration where he asked organizations and ministries to limit their visitation to the Reservation and for some, to come up with a plan of action on how to combat the virus. While our ministry is not located directly on the Reservation and therefore not required to come up with a plan of action, we have decided that the loving thing to do is to not give any appearance that we don't have concern for the health and well being of the people and therefore have decided to suspend our ministry activity down there for the next couple of weeks. We feel compelled to be humble and discerning in our interactions with the Lakota and especially look to glorify Jesus as we move towards need in such a time as this. But this is where God is simply amazing...while the coronavirus is temporarily closing doors for us to be down at Pine Ridge, God is opening doors for us to be reaching the Lakota in neighboring communities such as Rapid City, where there is a reported 30% Native population. We have been reconnecting with some of our Lakota Teens that we built a relationship with at Pine Ridge a few years ago and are now living and working in Rapid City...they are still in need of mentorship and having their spiritual needs met. One local Pastor in Rapid City recently told me, “one-third of the population of Rapid City is Native American and it's not reflected in the churches here.” He went on to tell me they had been praying about God sending them people who have a heart for native people and a desire to reach them with the gospel. We plan to begin working soon with a new church plant in Rapid City called Redeeming Grace Church (<https://rgcrc.org/>) where we will go to the places where Lakota congregate and conduct evangelism, meet basic needs and hopefully bring them into the church for further discipleship. We will still keep our ministry at Pine Ridge, but now have a new avenue, especially in light of the coronavirus, to reach the Lakota living on the outskirts of the reservation. Much of the Lakota population here is homeless, so there is great need and we really need your prayers!

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## Time out with the Magaa's

Recently we had the privilege of spending some time with our Lakota friends Dale and Rhonda Magaa. Dale used to be a rodeo cowboy so we met them for dinner in early February and took in the PBRCA Rodeo in Rapid City. It was a lot of fun to sit by Dale and have him explain why this guy fell off the horse and this guy was thrown off this bull...I didn't know there was so much technique involved other than "hold on for dear life!" It was a great evening spending time with our friends. If you remember, please pray for Rhonda as she is a nurse at the hospital in Pine Ridge and would be on the front lines if the coronavirus ends up coming to the reservation.



*Rhonda, Angie, me and the Cowboy*



*Another one bites the dust!*

## In Conclusion...

We continue to rejoice in all that God is doing here, especially in how he is leading us and directing our steps into ministry opportunities. Whether it's been having coffee with a Lakota single mom who needs guidance, or meeting up with one of the Lakota young adults we have made a relationship with, God is giving us opportunities to be a consistent voice in their lives. There is even one young Lakota woman who Angie was sending daily words of encouragement and scripture to for almost a year with no answer back...finally one day she answered Angie back and agreed to meet, telling Angie that "when you kept sending me those scriptures, many times the verses expressing just what I needed to hear, I knew that God was still pursuing me and I had value to him." That sums it up...God is great and his love endures forever! Thank you for your support and prayers of encouragement. We treasure them!