

kTb Ministries

Christ to the
First Nations



kTb Ministries Newsletter



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A Note from Ken...

The problem with being gifted to do a lot of things is that there is simply not enough daylight to do it all. When I pulled up the last NewsLetter we prepared, it was disturbing that it was so long ago. It is hard to inject the task of writing into an already over-stuffed day. So, now's the time to bring this chronicle up to date...

If there was any question about this work being God-Called, listen to what came up recently. Two men stopped by 1st Pima church searching for information about the location of the grave site of their aunt, Helen Lambert. The dedicated missionary was buried here in Sacaton in 1972. Thurleen did a Google search for Helen Lambert and found in the Catalina Association history that Miss Lambert was one of the last Missionaries sent by the Home Mission Board.

After rehabilitating their aunt's monument and grave, the nephew's dropped by the church to express thanks for helping them in their search. Though I was probably no more than 200 feet away, I didn't know they were here. I found later that one of the gentlemen had stated that he was from Grantsburg, Illinois. If that might sound familiar, Grantsburg is our home where Thurleen and I settled our family in 1988, 2 or 3 decades after Miss Lambert answered the call to the Sonoran Desert Indians!!

Could it be that her ancestral home was to where we were transplanted in 1988, ultimately to follow her by God's plan to the Tonto O'odham / Gila River reservations to help preserve the Native American Gospel work?

Speaking of time...I haven't had the time to check this out any further.



Felix Juan Ordination

Felix Juan began his first pastorate on Easter Sunday 2015. I expected to be able to help him get started in that role at Christ Fellowship Community Church, but Thurleen's stroke happened the day before. I also expected to arrange for him to be ordained but that would have to wait more than a year. And it was a year filled with tragedy. Sadly, Felix's wife Beverly passed away.

A few months later their grandson who lived with them died suddenly from natural causes... but nothing would deter Felix's passion to share Jesus with his people.

On April 24, 2016, CFCC at Hikiwan met to ordain their pastor. About 200 friends who love and appreciate Felix traveled from Phoenix, Tucson, and several reservations.

Catalina Association Director of Missions John Guillott gave a "Charge to the Church" message. Shawn Whitey, Pastor of 1st Indian Baptist Church in Phoenix, gave a "Charge to the Candidate" message. Former CFCC Pastor Gary Ramer led music. Each part was awesome.

An Ordination service was a big deal for the little Native church that has been through so much. It was a big deal for the new Cocklebur Ethne Church as well. Only a couple of years ago there were no Born Again Christians in cocklebur. This day they came in force to sing and testify for the congregation during the private preliminary time of the candidate examination.

It was fitting that Cocklebur was at the beginning. To frame the ending Pastor Pete and Nora Reede sang "I have Decided to Follow Jesus." First as a duet in English, then she renders it in O'odham, then he in Apache, then they finish in English, "No turning back...No turning back."

Pete and Nora's dramatic salvation in Phoenix in 1982 precipitated in Nora's family and friends becoming Christians in Hikiwan...and ultimately Christ Fellowship Community Church, suddenly, much like what has happened at cocklebur.

Just maybe the most impressive ordination service/ceremony I have ever attended.



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My prayer has been, "God use me no matter what condition I'm in." and I don't want any handicap to interfere with what God is doing in Native America. Paul: "... what ever state I'm in..."

God is able. Our 18 yr old granddaughter Sammy survived a horrendous slow speed wreck. Her Durango (The Tank) left a slick highway late on Halloween down a hillside. It rolled numerous times only touching the roof enough to strip off the

luggage rack. While mid-air and upside down, it touched the ground on the back of the roof and stood strait up on its tail, traveling vertically through the brush and between trees, slowly rotating like a top. Just before landing on its broken wheels, the only dent on the front fender (beside the headlight) came from hitting a tree 8 feet up from its roots. Though it was totaled, it never even had its plastic bumpers knocked off. Sammy and the 2 young pas-

sengers (in their seat belts) who she hadn't delivered home yet were fine and walked up out of the woods. The only injury (minor) was when the boy in the back seat was tapped on the head by a flying first aid kit.

A few days later her mom Kerry wanted to search for personal items, and to see the beloved old red Durango one more time. Immediately, she saw something shiny on the running board. Incredibly, it was a ring

that Sammy gave her when she was a little girl, "cause she wanted mommy to have something pretty."

Thank you Lord for taking care of our family. And thanks to our family for sharing us with our Native American family in the Sonoran Desert.

Editors note: Thurleen is recovering from a stroke in 2015

Mission Teams

Our 20 year-old motor home made the long trip from Illinois safely. Well, except for being hard to keep between the lanes. That was really difficult when we encountered strong cross winds in Texas. In heavy traffic a powerful gust hit us, loosened our 17 foot wide awning, and flipped it straight up like a sail. We thought we were going to fly straight to South Texas.

It ripped completely off just clearing the top of a carload of church ladies who then stopped to drag it off the highway.

The rig had no other mechanical failures until we arrived at Hikiwan. There, while setting still, the radiator sprang a leak. We managed to get 90 miles north to Sacaton where we would be closer to parts suppliers. That cost almost a thousand dollars in parts and six days of very difficult work for Ken between two mission teams.



Vienna FBC drove nonstop from IL to Hikiwan. They worked hard laying blocks on the new mission house during days and held a Bible School evenings. Their experience at Hikiwan appears to have inspired a passion for missions and a commitment to return.



FBC Harrisburg has sent a mission team four times. We love their consistency.

That's how lasting relationships develop with the local people. Appreciation for the intricacies of cultural distinctives they have accumulated has earned them the privilege of being able to do ministry work out in the village. We now get questions like "when are 'those people' coming back." In addition to having a "Bible Club" for the kids, an innovative multisession "Celebrate Recovery" drew a number of adults each evening.



finished laying the "house" rooms attached to the Mission house.

The next team should be able to build the roofs and close in the two rooms. Then two big hurdles are on the prayer list. One hurdle is funding for the big concrete floor and experienced concrete finishers. The other is funding for a septic system.

One of the benefits of having worked with Native churches of multiple tribes allowed us to stay on the Gila River (Pima) reservation so Thurleen could be near to Physical Therapy providers in Greater Phoenix. That turned out to be handy after 1st Pima Church approved building a major addition to their parsonage in order to accommodate Pastor Eric's rapidly growing family.



Ken was able to refine plans and assist in building the 1,800 sq ft two story addition. Two Kentucky churches brought funds and lots of mission team labor to get the project pretty close to being under roof.



Please understand that Ken didn't necessarily go to the reservations to do construction work. But God apparently has other plans. In the past 3 years, we have been involved in one way or another in the construction of over 12,000 square feet of buildings. We only had about a hundred dollars at the beginning. Three jobs are finished and three Native church additions/buildings are under construction. And funding graciously has arrived as it has been needed!

Eric and Brittany, and all the other Sonoran Desert Regional Mission(aries) are eager to welcome Rick and Chrisy Downing to join them in long term ministry in June. They have sold their home in Kentucky by God's calling to move to the rez.

Sonoran Desert Regional Missions

"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Jesus

The unique, and amazing, and precious thing about the missionaries of SDRM is that, though we came from different places, and originally didn't even know each other, we share common foundational theologies and missions philosophies.

- **Jesus exchanged our sin personally for the righteousness of God unto us, by dying for us.** (see 2 Corinthians 5:21)
- **We are commanded to be "disciple-makers"** (see Matthew 28:19-20)

The first truth is the simplicity of Grace and it is documented over and over throughout the New Testament. The second is the last thing that Jesus asked of believers immediately before he ascended into Heaven.

The Great Commission does *not* say, "Go ye therefore and plant churches..." That would put the cart before the horse. It fosters learning how to "do church" before becoming grounded and strengthened.

Eric and Brittany Gibbs labored faithfully for 4 years in Cockleburrr (*one of the darkest villages we have experienced*) before seeing their work bear fruit.

As new believers were born again, the Gibbs' steadily taught the Word. They didn't teach how to be a church...new believers discovered from their own Bible study that they ARE a church. In 2 years, nearly thirty souls have been saved and most were baptized in a horse trough outdoors in the middle of the village. Not only is the new church solid, she is missional...reaching out to share Christ in surrounding villages. Get this: where there was abject hopelessness, most of the new Christian families now have been blessed with gainful employment. Jesus IS the answer.

[Follow this link](#) to a recent wonderful article about The Gibbs' in the **Baptist Press**, the news service of the Southern Baptist Convention.

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