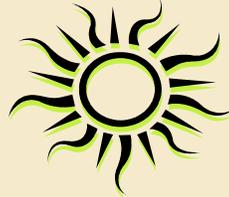




Native



Sons



Equipping Native Leaders to Reach Native Americans

BLAIR SCHLEPP

POINTS OF INTEREST:

- The Sioux Nation is comprised of 3 tribes, the Lakota, the Dakota, and the Nakota.
- The 7 clans of the Lakota include: Ogalala ("They Scatter Their Own"); Sicangu (or Brule; "Burnt Thighs"); Hunkpapa ("End of Circle" or "Keepers of the Gate"); Miniconjou ("Planters Beside the Stream"); Sisasapa ("Blackfeet", this is not the commonly known Blackfoot tribe); and Itazipacola ("Without Bows" also known as Oohenupa).

PRAYER POINTS

- Healing for Theresa's shoulder.
- New financial partners
- Increased enrollment and finances for AIC

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Before his birth the medicine man told his mother, "This child will be a spiritual leader for his people; you need to raise him in a spiritual way." Others said similar things, including the local Lutheran pastor. Like Jeremiah, Blair was set apart from the womb.

Blair Schlepp is a Hunkpapa Lakota Sioux. He is also brilliant. He has a photographic memory, similar recall for things he has heard, and is fluent in both Lakota and English. He was offered a full-ride scholarship to Stanford to get his doctorate (which he turned down), yet is down to earth. He is spiritually connected. If you shake his hand God may reveal things about you to him. While ministering on his reservation others often saw two large men, all dressed in white, walking with him, protecting him, and talking with him—a pair of angels that he himself was never aware of.

Brilliant and spiritually gifted, his life has not been easy. Blair's father left shortly before he was born. His step-father was abusive, beating him daily from his earliest memory. "The man who sheds a tear is no man to fear" the big German would tell his stepson. He beat him to teach him not to cry; when he quit crying he beat him to "keep him in shape." "I did not fit anywhere" Blair remarks. Although he has Native features, his skin color was lighter

than other Lakota. He was picked on by Anglos for being Native and poor. He was picked on by Natives for not being Native enough. It did not help that he stuttered.

His mother recognized his giftedness and refused to let him attend the Native school, choosing to send him off the Rez to a better school. The school wanted to advance him 3-4 years above his age level, but his parents refused out of concern for



Blair Schlepp

keeping him with his peers. He was in fights often. His step-father beat him for fighting, would spank him if he lost, and then take him back to refight the other child until he beat him. I asked "what if they beat you again?" He said, "I never lost a second time, I did what I had to do." By the time he was in the 2nd grade he was beating 5th & 6th graders.

Blair is now 55, just 2-years older than me. The prejudice and the problems he grew up under are not ancient history, they are the current legacy of American history. Blair is not angry, "I am thankful that my children did not have to grow up under this." but he acknowledges that race issues remain a problem today.

Blair was exposed to and raised in a variety of spiritual beliefs including the teaching of the Catholic, Episcopal, Methodist, Lutheran, and Assemblies of God churches as well as traditional Native spirituality. The Bible intrigued him, "so many of the stories in it resembled my culture." He felt the AG church resembled his culture most, because of the Spirit and openness to the spiritual world. "People talk about miracles, but to us every day is a miracle. We have always understood that the Creator made us... life is not happenstance or fate, everything has a purpose. Life is a journey. Native people do not need miracles to believe; miracles are a part of life."

Blair was the first in his family of 9 to come to Jesus. His mom had been sending him to the AG church via a bus ministry. One night she had a dream that all her children were taken off to heaven, but that she was left behind. The next morning was Sunday. The

ON A PERSONAL NOTE

I continue to love teaching here at AIC! It is a privilege to be able to invest my life in helping to raise up the next generation of Native spiritual leaders. I am surrounded by great students, great co-workers, and great weather (At least for now! You can't beat winter temps in the 70s, but then again summer is coming which will be up to 120!)

Theresa has healed well from her neck surgery. We had a couple of scares when doctors discovered a tumor in her brain and another in her breast. Both have turned out

to be benign, but require follow up. Unfortunately her shoulder was hurt during one MRI and she needs to go to physical therapy for a month and then can get an MRI to find out what is wrong. We appreciate your prayers as she job hunts.

It was good to see Levi & Alicia, Caleb, and our grandchildren over Christmas, but we were disappointed that there was almost no snow—the storm hit the day after we left! We do miss seeing them.

STUDENTS AFTER HEARING ABOUT PROJECT



church bus ran late, but she was the first one on it. She sat in the back of the church and at the altar call “could not wait to get up to the front. God saved her and she never turned back.”

Saved at 5, Blair’s pastor started training him immediately for the ministry. He walked with the Lord, but there were few children in the church and little to support him. At 11 he had his first drink and fell in and out of drinking and drug use. “I was not a raging alcoholic, but I did recognize that I needed to change or something was going to happen.” Something did happen, his best friend wrapped his car around a tree. God spoke, “Either change or it is just a matter of time and you will be dead.” Blair was 18, five weeks later he went off to Dallas to attend Christ for the Nations Bible Institute.

After 2 years he returned home where he served as an associate pastor for 4 years in his home church. During his second year there he began teaching at the Good Shepherd Bible Institute, later to become Central Indian Bible College—a school started by his pastor. While teaching he received his Associates of Practical Theology, then his BS in Pastoral Minis-

try & Evangelism. He pioneered a church that grew to over 65 under his ministry. He taught at CIBC for 9-10 years, then left to study counseling at Ashland Theological Seminary where he earned his Master’s in counseling. He has done relief work among Native people, has his own private counseling practice, and speaks at various conferences as a counselor and authority on Native issues.

Around 1993 David Moore and Jim Lopez approached him about serving at AIC. Already an ordained minister in the AG, Blair became a Home Missionary, raised his funding, then began at AIC. He served from 1995 until 2001; under doctor’s orders he left because of problems with diabetes and cancer. He returned to AIC in 2011, where he remains today.

He notes that fundraising as a missionary was hard on him. “In Native cultures you are taught not to be self-promoting. In our culture leaders do not plead for support—the people are supposed to take care of their leaders. Fund-raising was hard, because I was forced to pull away from my cultural upbringing.” Even so, he has some miraculous stories of how God

used him while itinerating

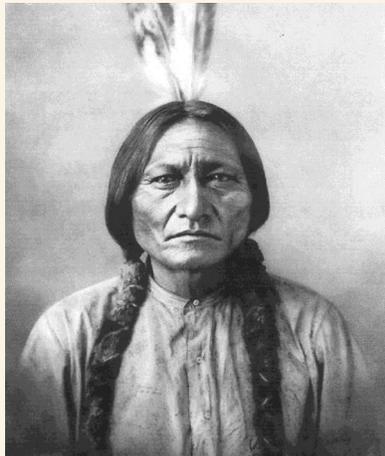
Blair has served in a number of positions at AIC. He is well loved and respected as a professor and counselor. He has let go of his ministerial credentials, but continues his private counseling practice and specializes in substance abuse. Although he has pastored on a number of occasions, he prefers teaching, finding it more fulfilling.

Blair is the great-great grandson of Sitting Bull. One of Blair’s great-great grandmothers was Smokey Waters, a woman who the spirits used to curse and condemn people.

“This child will be a spiritual leader for his people...” Blair is. He mixes a deep and genuine spirituality with advanced theoretical training and practical application. I am amazed by his gifts and am reminded that often those God intends to use the most, He wounds deeply to form a true man of God. It is an honor to know and serve with him.

A Very Short History of the Sioux

The Sioux are thought to have originally migrated from Asia about 30,000 years ago. They are Indians of the Great plains that were nomadic hunters that migrated with the buffalo herds. The Spanish introduced horse to the Sioux in the 1500s. Catholic priests were the first to evangelize the Sioux people. Sioux means “little snake” and was the name given to the Sioux by the Chippewa Indians.



Sitting Bull
Lakota leader and medicine man

ground by the Sioux and Cheyenne. When gold was discovered in the Black Hills the US government refused to honor the treaty. General George Custer was sent into the area to find a route to the southwest, look for a suitable location for an army fort, and to investigate the possibility of gold mining. The Hunkpapa Lakota Sioux leader Sitting Bull led the incursion against Custer known as the Battle of the Little Big Horn in 1876 (Custer’s Last Stand).

“Ghost Dance” movement - a sacred dance that was thought would rid the land of the white man, but was outlawed by the government . In 1889 officers were sent to arrest Sitting Bull, but a fight erupted and he was killed along with 7 of his supporters and 6 police.

On December 29, 1890 the government demanded the surrender of all Sioux weapons. Amid the tensions a single shot was accidentally fired. Chief Big Foot was then shot in cold blood and almost all of the 300 unarmed men, women, and children who had surrendered were slaughtered by Custer’s reconstructed 7th Cavalry. The Massacre of Wounded Knee was the last showdown

Colonial America expanded geographically and dominated the original inhabitants of the land, eventually forcing the Sioux into the Great Sioux Reservation that encompassed parts of Montana, Wyoming, Nebraska, and North and South Dakota (see map). Chief Red Cloud of Oglala Teton Dakota Sioux was among those signing this treaty that assigned the Black Hills to the Sioux and forbidding white settlement in 1868. This area is considered sacred

The American army continued to wage war against the Sioux to gain possession of the treaty land. Skirmishes continued until the Sioux were driven from their land. Sitting Bull, with part of his band escaped into British Territory (Canada), but eventually surrendered and returned on the promise of pardon in 1881 where he was held prisoner on the Standing Rock Reservation. Eventually, he was allowed to travel and met Annie Oakley, who he named “Little Sure-Shot.” He then traveled with Buffalo Bill Cody’s Wild West show for earning \$50 per week, but life on the road was unpleasant with hissing crowds and the papers calling him “as mild mannered a man as ever cut a throat or scalped a helpless woman.”

In 1885 he returned to his reservation. In 1888 he influenced his tribe to refuse to cede further lands to the government. A year later he joined the



between Native American and the United States Army.



Massacre of Wounded Knee

