

A TALE OF TWO GIANTS

By Johnny K. Hughes
Executive Director
Indian Ministries of North America, Inc.
Cleveland, Tennessee
www.indianministries.org

Recently I was awakened around 3 a.m. following an unusual and thought-provoking dream. In this dream, I was standing at the edge of a large field. To my left I saw a giant of a man bound by ropes and stakes to the ground. I could see that he was struggling to get loose and free himself, but to no avail. As I approached, I noticed that it was a Native American man. I looked closely and could see that the ropes were inscribed with words such as: hopeless, alcohol, drugs, suicide, anger, fear, depression, unforgiveness, abuse, etc. I wanted to help, but the things that bound him were bigger than I alone could handle. My attention was then directed to another giant figure lying nearby in a field.

I cautiously approached this figure, because there were no constraints or bindings that I could see. The figure was lying there as if it were sleeping. It was not being forced to stay in that position, but it appeared that it had chosen to lie down. All I could see were the words, "My Church" written across the chest.

After a time of lying there, wondering and praying about the dream, the Lord began to speak to my spirit about what I had experienced. It was then that I became very disturbed, disheartened, and disappointed.

God began to bring to my memory many prophetic words that had been spoken over the Native American people, including the latter day revival that is coming to those nations. I recalled the words spoken by Rev. Billy Graham several years ago that referred to the "awakening of the Brown Giant." It soon became clear to me what I had seen in the dream.

Working in Native American ministry is a real challenge at times, because it truly feels that, to most churches, they are a forgotten and overlooked people group. I have even been told by "church people" that what we do is not really missions, since we are working within the United States.

The dream became clear. We have an awakening of the Brown Giant taking place, but we have a church in America that seems to be sleeping and not taking notice of the bindings that are so tightly constraining the people. The dream has been constantly on my mind and I continue to pray for clarification.

Recently I was studying in the book of Acts, when the Lord led me to chapter 3. As I read the account of Peter and John encountering the lame man at the gate called Beautiful, God began to show me a clearer definition of the dream. The man, who had been lame from birth, was carried to the gate each morning to beg for alms. I immediately realized a parallel to this and the generational curses of my Native American brothers. A spirit of poverty cradles our people in its wicked arms and lays them out daily, begging for a handout. What got them into this need for dependence on others?

On a recent trip to the Washita Memorial Museum in Cheyenne, Oklahoma, I read where the troops had forced the Plains Indians, such as the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Lakota and others, into designated lands or reservations. These nomadic hunters, who followed the buffalo and hunted the land for survival, were forced to live in one designated area, where the game had been overhunted to near extinction. The people were starving. The government sent seeds and other farming supplies and told them to fend for themselves.

However, these people were great hunters; not farmers. Now they were forced to learn a new lifestyle so they could survive. To assist these great hunters, the federal government began to send food rations and supplies. This caused dependence on the government—the very people who placed them in these open prisons or land trusts. America the beautiful, the gate to freedom, had now become the place where our proud brothers and sisters were forced to beg to survive. Unfortunately, many of their cries for help were met with blankets laced with small-pox and other infections and diseases, and rations of rancid meat to feed their families.

The poverty that exists among our Native people is both physical and spiritual. The generational and spiritual strongholds that bind our people place them in a position of believing that this is the life they must live and there is no escaping it. This opens doors to alcoholism, drug addictions, suicide, and many mental and physical diseases.

The church has the answer; and like Peter and John, we must affix our eyes on America's First People, the First fruits of this nation, and speak forth, "Look on us." They need Christ just as any other indigenous people around the world. The church needs to be an example and break out of the mindset that we just keep enabling the hand-out mentality that the government started and is continuing today. I have been there to see churches going out in the name of Jesus, many times tripping over each other, to give a hand-out.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not against benevolence and caring for the physical needs of the poor. But we must not lose focus on the whole picture. I have yet to see a naked and starving young person commit suicide. What good are we doing when we send out armies of people into neighborhoods to

hand out sack lunches and put a fresh coat of paint on the exterior of a home, knowing that the inside is ruled by darkness and is collapsing from within.

There comes a time when it is more about souls and finding a way to disciple and train people in the ways of Jesus, than it is to put a feather in a missions' cap. Why go into a neighborhood to build a church and return home to show off the photographs of the beautiful exterior, while failing to mention that the interior has no electricity, sheetrock, or flooring? Whose kingdom are we building?

It breaks my heart to minister in a community where we find spiritually hungry people, but no one there to disciple them when we leave. Church, we have the answer. Like Peter and John, we must say, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have, I give to you." As the people reach for the hand-out, we must extend our right hand of strength and declare, "ARISE!"

We have two giants that need to arise: one is bound and one is sleeping! The Giant of a Church must wake up, stand up, and speak life and strength into a giant that is desperately trying to arise. We have the power of the Holy Spirit to loosen the constraints and to see an outpouring take place among America's First People. As the Holy Spirit rises up within us, we will be able to see the strength return to their bodies and legs. Then we will see the Native American people take their rightful place as spiritual leaders in these last days.

Arise my brother; the time has come to check into your destiny. Your reservation has been confirmed and now by the power of the Holy Spirit I speak life into the plan that was to bring death. You have been reserved for this time. Now ARISE!