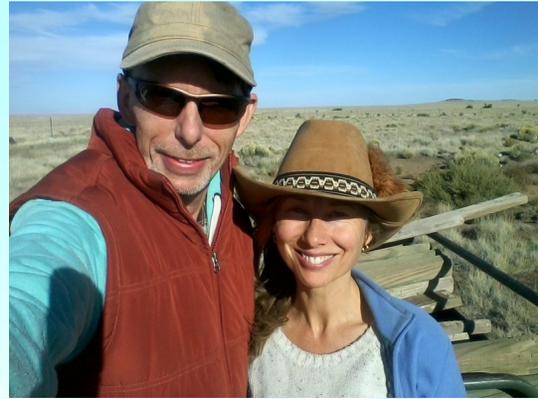


Catalyst

*Stimulating Action
& Effecting Change*

Awakened to Action!

Many Native Americans are experiencing a spiritual awakening which is chronicled (in part) by a new documentary—*Awakened: The Spiritual Destiny of the First Americans* (see page 3). Although the film focuses on the Navajo (the largest tribe), we have heard from the film producer (who is also a friend) that across the U.S. many tribes are experiencing this ‘awakening’ and a sense that this is *their time*. As they are presented with a true representation of who God is (see article pages 2-3), they are rising up from a legacy of pain and brokenness, brought on by those who first came to their land, and sadly, not only came with the gospel, but often also imposed their own ‘white’ culture.



So, in the words of evangelist Billy Graham, the ‘Sleeping Giant’ has awakened...but to what? Transitioning from ‘being asleep’ to ‘being awake’ is great but waking up is not an end in itself, only a beginning. God has much, much more. When it’s time to awake, it is time to act! There is work to be done. While some may be hoping for a supernatural visitation or revival from heaven to bring about change, it is usually the case that God is expecting His people to take action and to engage in Kingdom activity under His direction.

The other day we asked a Navajo pastor how we could help serve the native people. He told us through training and discipleship. Native believers know about Jesus but often get stuck at the Cross and don’t assume their place ‘in Christ’, he said. Like the Hebrews who experienced a wonderful salvation from Egypt but never possessed the ‘Promised Land’ and spent years walking around a desert, the Native Americans not only need to ‘wake up’, they also need to be empowered and released to be all that God has created them to be. Then they can take their place in what God wants to do through them in these days. It will be a privilege to be involved in empowering these precious people.

Going Native!

In order to better identify with the Chinese people, the famous English missionary, J. Hudson Taylor, adopted a radical idea of dressing like the Chinese. He even wore a Chinese pigtail. We didn’t set out to specifically follow Taylor’s example with the Native Americans, but in moving to a piece of property close to the Navajo reservation —“off grid” which is a whole new challenge and adventure for us—it seems that we are now living like many of the native people do! It’s not easy, but it gives a sense of identification and helps build relationship.



The Drum is Beating as God Awakens the First Nations of America!

Many Christians know little of the Native Americans on whose blood America was founded, but God knows all. Their blood cries to Him from the earth.

It had not been our intention to learn about all this when we first came to North America. Our ministry was with Chinese. We were 'as blind as a bat' as far as the history of the original peoples were concerned. Our knowledge of 'Indians' came from watching cowboy and Indian movies as children and later, learning the romanticized story of the 'Pilgrims' and Thanksgiving, which equated to really no knowledge at all!

Many stories surround the arrival of the first puritans (known later as the Pilgrims) from Europe on the shores of Turtle Island (the original name given to America by the indigenous peoples). However, as the white man began to settle on Turtle Island, so began the oppression of the people who lived there. What follows is a story of murder and theft on a massive scale. Instead of being able to make their wonderful contribution to their own nations and the world, the Native American Indian population was severely reduced and ravaged by disease, warfare, oppression and the massive taking of their land by Europeans. Every treaty made by Europeans concerning the land was broken. Much of the culture was systematically destroyed and this was encouraged by Christians who told them they must adopt Western culture in order to be 'Christian', creating confusion, loss of identity and barriers to the gospel.

Thousands of children were forcibly removed from their homes and taken to European-run, and often Church-run, boarding schools where they were further stripped of their language and culture, and often cruelly abused. Europeans believed that they must, 'kill the Indian to save the man'. The result is post-traumatic stress disorder, poverty, depression, high suicide rates, alcoholism, drug abuse, unemployment, school truancy, high crime rates and the highest levels of diabetes and heart disease in the country, as well as a deep suspicion of Christianity and 'the white man's religion'. Only 2-3% of the indigenous peoples of America are currently believers; many have been left traumatized, confused and in poverty where they remain to this day.

Soon after God began putting the First Nations peoples on our hearts, His message to us was simple – **Revisit the Foundations!** Faulty foundations don't disappear with time or ignorance. As God seeks to advance His Kingdom on Earth, He will call on His people to re-address foundational issues that are not right for they continue to influence what is built in successive generations. He wants a Kingdom that cannot be shaken (Heb. 12:27-28). For that to happen, the foundations are crucial. They have to be revisited, examined, and put right. Even though they may have been laid a few hundred years ago, the faults will remain and the cracks will never disappear. It is time to move over and let God dig out and re-establish foundations built on Him! God is turning His face to the host nations of America. He is calling His people to understand, recognize and repent of historical and foundational wrongs and view *and do things differently*.

The idea that a people must reject their own culture and join another's in order to fully obey and follow Jesus is one of the most foundational errors in mission strategy, and it is still going on today. God wants **recognition** of the wrongs done, a spirit of humility and **repentance** among Western Christians and churches, and a heart to bring **restoration**. It is vital for Native American people to see a loving Creator God who rejoices over who He has made them to be, and the beautiful aspects of

their culture. It is vital for them to be heard and their hearts to be healed. It is vital that they be encouraged and empowered, and that leaders and missionaries are raised up from within their tribes.

As evangelist Billy Graham prophesied 40 years ago about these ‘forgotten people’, the ‘Sleeping Giant’ of Native America is waking up to its place in Christ. God wants us to work with Him in what He is doing among native people through better representation, giving a voice, learning, affirming, empowering, and through reconciliation and partnership.

God has spoken prophetically that He is now stopping the momentum of heartache. He is stopping the momentum of disappointment. He is stopping the momentum of the covenants broken by the church and government. God is awakening the hearts of the native people. Something is about to happen and while the country prays for revival, it must begin with the first people.

Part of our ministry is to comfort the brokenhearted, listening to their stories with a spirit of humility, as we repent for the legacy of a colonized gospel that was *not* ‘good news’. We seek to be a channel of God’s healing power, reconciliation and restoration as we **re-present** Jesus, sensitively share His love, and disciple and empower believers to be the mighty warriors God has created and called them to be for His Kingdom! CATALYST

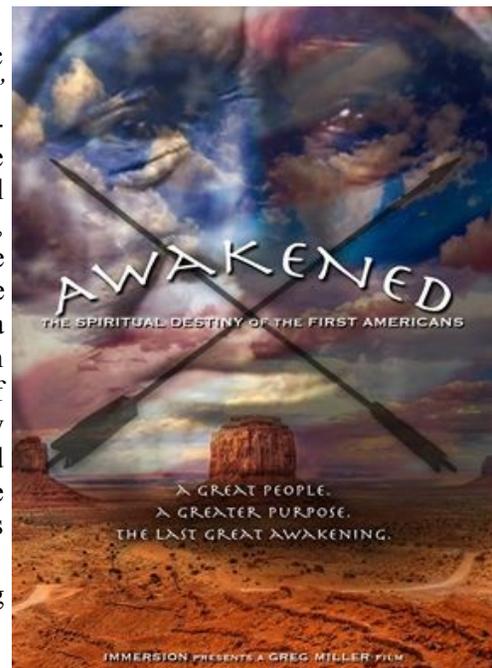
AWAKENED: The Spiritual Destiny of the First Americans

This new documentary film, produced by Greg Miller, journeys through the often sorrowful history of Christian interaction with the First Nations people, into the present and prophetic sense of what God is about to do through them.

The early section of the film recounts how Christian missionaries often blew it with the native population (hence the need to ‘revisit the foundations’). A recording of Billy Graham speaking in 1975 with some native Christian leaders acknowledges this. He states, *“I think many missionaries mistakenly tried to convert the Indian to a culture rather than to Christ. They forced upon him forms of worship strange to his heritage and traditions.”* A Navajo pastor states the missionaries “did not share the gospel just so we would know Jesus, but so we would know the rules of white civilization.”

It has been 40 years since Billy Graham made the prophetic statement that the Native Americans *“are a sleeping giant”* and that when they awake, they may become a spiritual superpower that could change not only America, but the world. The First Americans are now awake and stepping into their spiritual destiny! In 2015, the largest of the tribes, the Navajo Nation, elected on-fire, born-again Christians as its president and vice president. In April, seventy-five tribes were represented at the massive *Azusa Now!* revival gathering in Los Angeles, taking a strong leadership position for the first time at a major Christian conference. Recently, in Washington DC at a National Day of prayer of First Nations peoples, a proclamation put together by many tribes was delivered. In spite of the legacy of pain and trauma, these native Christian leaders moved in an opposite spirit of love by expressing forgiveness and blessing towards those who oppressed them.

The Awakened film is available as a DVD or full-streaming from www.awakenedfirstnations.com.



Finding God in Chinese Characters



This unique, bilingual set of 25 Chinese character cards with explanatory guide is **now available!** Produced by Stuart, this one-of-a-kind card set is an ideal tool to use with Chinese friends to help them see how God has revealed Himself to the Chinese people through their written language.

Most Chinese do not know that the foundational truths of the Christian gospel can be found in the most ancient forms of pictographic Chinese writing. This pack of cards shows that from the beginning of Chinese civilization, God has sought to reveal Himself to the Chinese people. The characters in this pack demonstrate God's redemptive plan, from the Creation account to salvation, embedded in the characters used throughout China's long written history (which pre-dates the birth of Moses). Each character has a brief explanation to show how its composition relates to the truths revealed in the Bible. This attractive, easy-to-understand, convenient pack can be used in so many settings to introduce the gospel in a fun and fascinating way. To order, please contact us at catalystmin@gmail.com.



Stuart & Michelle Simpson are based in Flagstaff, AZ, on the edge of the Navajo Reservation. They are the founders of Catalyst Ministries (www.catalystmin.org) and on staff at YWAM Tribal Winds. They both recently received doctorate degrees from Phoenix University of Theology.

To partner with them in this precious ministry, financially support, and learn more about effective cross-cultural ministry and missions, contact Stuart & Michelle at: catalystmin@gmail.com.

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