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...from the Heart

A true friend of Indian Ministries of North America is now celebrating in the presence of the Lord. Lonnie Rackard passed away on Tuesday, September 23, 2014, only 5 days after his Mother, Ruthie Mae Rackard, passed at the age of 94.

We first met Lonnie, and his wife Carolyn, about 13 years ago. They are members of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians in southern Alabama, and it was a connection that God ordained. They have served faithfully as IMNA representatives among the Poarch Creek tribe for several years.

Lonnie was a well-respected elder in his tribe, church, family and community. He was an easy man to love; he was just like a beloved family member to all of us. Lonnie had a contagious smile, and when you met him, you knew right away that he loved the Lord. He was always full of joy, regardless of what he was going through or the pain he was experiencing.

Lonnie faced many health battles during the time we knew him, and he had lost both legs and a few of his fingers. He had a great love of music and enjoyed playing the guitar and singing at church and at home. He was always ready to whip out his guitar and play one of his favorite hymns when anyone visited their home. He never let his physical condition hinder him from his personal praise and worship to his Savior.

Lonnie had a true compassion for helping people, especially those in need. Before retiring from the ship yards in Mobile, a desperate individual came seeking a job. The only problem was, this man couldn’t read or write, but Lonnie watched over him and filled out all his paperwork and he was able to gain employment.

Lonnie never took a back seat when there was work to be done. I remember many years ago when IMNA volunteers helped renovate the former sanctuary of his church, the Atmore United Pentecostal Church, and he was right there in the midst of all the demolition and rebuilding.

Another favorite memory of Lonnie and Carolyn is that every Sunday, they always color coordinated their outfits. Even the day of the funeral, Carolyn made sure they color coordinated. That always brought a smile every time I saw them coming into church.

Lonnie lived his life with a smile, a kind word, words of wisdom and a helping hand. His funeral was truly a celebration and testament to the life he lived. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

Lonnie is survived by his wife of 43 years, Carolyn, two sons, Jason and his wife Mary, Jeremy and his wife Jasmine, five precious grandchildren, Kinzie, Destiny, Dallon, Khalia and Jackson, one brother and five sisters.
In the summer of 2012, while serving as a part of IMNA’s Release Program, three young musicians’ lives were changed forever. Christopher Hughes, son of Johnny Hughes, Lindsey Slaughter of Aiken, South Carolina, and Nic LaVallie, formerly of Deer River, Minnesota, came together to lead worship for the team over the course of the summer. As Christopher put it, “When we first sang together, the blend of our voices, the perfect sound I heard, it was most definitely a God thing.” And so it was. All three now reside in Cleveland, Tennessee and have formed the band Grafted, a crossover band seeking to bridge the gap between the Christian and Secular music worlds. Their slogan, “Remembering the roots and how they got us here,” is the mission they seek to instill in their listeners. From revivals to youth retreats to outdoor concerts, they continue to fight to make a difference in the most influential industry in America today. For more information or to connect with and support Grafted’s vision, email info.graftedmusic@gmail.com, or follow the social media sights below.

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"If the Mission is Possible..."

By Shanel Tsosie

Who would believe that a Navajo girl from New Mexico would get a once in a lifetime chance to leave the country and enter a whole new continent? I didn’t see it happening to me. Yet, this is the beauty of a loving God who cares for the desires of His children. I was in South Africa and Mozambique for ten weeks in the summer. As my first trip out of the country, I loved the chance to learn, make relationships, grow spiritually, and feel God in every place and moment.

To experience God in a new environment was beautiful. Learning their languages, customs, and life-stories of the people we encountered was a special treat. I couldn’t believe that God had given me this opportunity to live out His commandment in a whole new way. Jesus tells us “Go Ye Therefore and Make Disciples of All Nations, Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19); the powerful words of a loving Savior who also told us to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind while also loving our neighbor like oneself” (Matthew 22:34-40).

I didn’t fully understand what it meant to be a missionary, and honestly, I am still learning and growing, but when we left for this internship, I did not know that God had so much more in store for me. He expressed to me that my perspectives would change, my love for God would grow, and my faith and hope would be strengthened. I would step into a new leadership season, my love for missions would deepen, and my spiritual disciplines would be tested.

When you are on the field, you need God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit all day, every day. There were times where I would see orphanages in ruins and families with little to wear or eat, and it...
Indian Ministries of North America is establishing an Impact Warriors youth mentoring program, along with a Warriors of the Word Bible Training Institute class, at the Macedonia Indian Baptist Church in the Conehatta community of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. IMNA has become involved with this local church and the community during the last few months. We had volunteer crews painting the interior and exterior of the facility, held a 3 day revival and a week long youth revival. We are scheduled to hold a community Christmas Celebration on December 12 at the Conehatta Community Facility, followed by a community youth rally on December 13.

We are excited to be involved in this community and look forward to impacting lives for the Kingdom. We will begin working with both the mentoring program and the Bible training in early November. Please be in prayer for adult mentors to work with the youth and for hungry souls ready to dive deep into the Word for a deeper understanding of knowledge and wisdom of God.

was in those moments where I needed God. So, have I grown spiritually? Yes, but not yet to the point where I know God wants me to be. God puts us in these situations so we can be with Him and feel His presence. At times, I missed home and wanted to be back, but as I have learned from Dr. Moodley at Lee University, “If the Mission is possible, then the Cost is irrelevant.” I know soon God will have me in the field showing His love to His people full-time, and I could not be more excited. God will take you anywhere you desire because He loves you and understands that what you do will glorify Him. To me, doing missions was in my heart; I didn’t see it happening to me.

In Ephesians 3:20-21, “20 Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, 21 to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.” God deserves all the glory, for I only come to be His servant.

Shanel has been a part of the IMNA youth discipleship program since 2009.
Summer Scenes from Oklahoma

TOP LEFT: Carol Joyce and Louise at service in the park.
ABOVE: Beau Kelley shares a Bible story with the Cheyenne children in Hammon. LEFT: Johnny Hughes, along with community church members, pray for the needs of the people in a community outreach.
BELOW: Paradigm, a Navajo worship band from Shiprock, New Mexico, lead worship at a Hammon community service.

Above Left: Cheyenne children worship with flags during an outdoor service.
Left: Philip Crauswell from Center Hill Baptist Church in Hanceville, AL works on the roof of the new kitchen pantry for Grace Point Ministry Center in Hammon.
It was a great honor to visit the Solid Rock Church of God in Centerville, Iowa recently. The church chose to bless IMNA with the offerings from the Summer Vacation Bible School. Because of the Western theme of the event, they wanted to be a blessing to Native American children. We had the privilege of worshipping with the church family during the Sunday morning service, and following the service, the children came forward and blessed us with a very generous offering and a time of prayer. It is great to see churches encourage and teach children the Biblical principles of sowing into the Kingdom. When children are exposed to missions and investing into the Kingdom, their lives will never be the same. I challenge other churches to catch the vision of these children, and invest in reaching our Native youth for Christ.

Thank you World Vision, North Texas, for your commitment to assisting the needs of the Native American people. Through your generous donations, insulation was used to make additions to the Grace Point Ministry Center and Stonewall Indian Baptist Church. (Above left) Beau Kelley, IMNA volunteer, adds insulation to the new kitchen pantry for Grace Point in Hammon, OK. (Above right) Pastor Robert Patrick, second from left, along with his deacon and family, stand in front of the insulation donation ready to be blown into the attic of the new sanctuary.
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