Are We Hiding the Book?

"God changed my life..."

Release 2012

Remembering a True Friend
Rev. James Castello
Indian Ministries of North America, Inc.

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Johnny K. Hughes
The following is the testimony of a student from IMNA’s Warriors of the Word Bible Institute in Pearl River, Mississippi. Carlston Isaacs, a member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw, has shown a real hunger for the Word of God and a deep desire to grow in the wisdom of God.

I was a teenager when I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior. I felt the Lord’s call for me to minister to my people; however, as the years progressed, I found myself turning away from the Lord, until I eventually forgot His call for my life. What happened to me? There are many answers to this question, but one stands out; “I failed God!”

For many of us who grew up with an alcoholic parent(s), it is a cycle with no end. It is my hope and fervent prayer, that I can help bring about an end to this vicious cycle through this story. Alcoholism is accepted as a way of life for many Native Americans, but it should not be. “We are the most spiritual people” in Western Civilization.

Growing up with an alcoholic father, I experienced firsthand what it takes on a family. My father was by no means hateful or neglectful. He was wise in many ways and took care of our necessities for life, but I realize now how alcohol took away his spirit and ultimately his life. This is the road I was on until God called me back.

In my teenage years, I started on a downhill ride by hanging out with “friends” who “didn’t know” or “didn’t care” who God was. I had my first taste of alcohol at the age of 13. Even though I didn’t drink for a while after that, the craving was always there. “Peer pressure, wanting to be accepted by my friends, etc., were all excuses given to my parents about why I wanted to hang out with my new friends. This started my journey into self destruction.

During one of my drinking bouts, my girlfriend got pregnant and I married her at the age of 16. The marriage didn’t last a year. I have been married three more times, but all have ended with the same result —DIVORCE. I’ve lost count of the many relationships I have messed up in my life, due to my aggressive behavior when drinking.

My relationships with family members fared no better. I alienated them, and didn’t want them around unless they were willing to “do for me.” I was selfish, wanting things my way, right here, right now. If I couldn’t get that, then I pouted like a little boy. One sister wanted nothing to do with me and another worried that I would die before my time. My brother was concerned about my problems and continued to talk to me about them. My mother did all this and more, while my father begged me not to be like him. None of these family opinions mattered to me, and I could not see how much pain I was causing them.

Needless to say, this lifestyle takes a toll on one’s life and many choose to end their life, as I have tried twice. Some seek treatment, which I have tried three times. Some quit on their own, because they can see what it has done to them and their family. Some quit because of their failing health or by death.

The demons that I battled took away my loving relationship with God and all the good things He promised. I was emotionally and spiritually dead. I didn’t care what happened to me or anyone around me. I lied, cheated, stole or whatever it took to get what I wanted. I became disillusioned with life and didn’t want to live anymore, but most of all, it took away my loved ones, especially my dad. These are just a few of the things that I encountered.

Today, I am here because of God and His love for me. He took away all the bad parts I had, and He gave me a new lease on life through His loving grace. It all started when I became sick and tired of being sick and tired. I got down on my knees and asked God to forgive me. I was literally tired of living and did not know what to do, but when I turned to God, my prayers were answered, I vowed that I never wanted to walk away from Him again.
Commissioning Native Leaders for Kingdom Impact

God moved mightily and poured out His Spirit upon several Native young people at IMNA’s Warriors Empowering Warriors gathering in July. This was a great opportunity for young Native Americans to gather in the heart of the Smokey Mountains and seek God’s face for 5 days and 4 nights concerning His will for their lives. These young people, representing 7 different reservations from across the county, encountered Him through worship, teaching of the Word, and relationship building. WEW was held at the Western North Carolina COG Conference Center in the town of Whittier, NC just outside of Cherokee, NC.

Ministers and musicians from various tribes spoke into the lives of the young people encouraging them to fulfill the mission and vision of IMNA of being frontline warriors impacting lives, restoring the broken, healing the wounded and setting the captives free. Among those who shared were James Hughes, IMNA Founder, Johnny Hughes, IMNA Executive Director, Rodney LaVallie, IMNA VP / Director of Ministries and a member of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa. Also, sharing through music and the Word were Erik Bledsoe, a Choctaw Christian recording artist from Nashville, Tennessee and Chris Allen and his wife, Joy, representing the Lumbee tribe and based in Cleveland, Tennessee.

God has given a mandate to IMNA to begin raising up young warriors, empowering them to walk out their destiny as the leaders of their own people; to give them a hope for the future, an understanding of life principles and Biblical training. All of this being accomplished under the direction of Native Warriors for Christ who have already stood the test of time.

These seasoned warriors for Christ have conquered many of the same battles that bring a sense of hopelessness and despair to the younger generation. They have stories to share and victories to proclaim to this generation. Warriors Empowering Warriors (WEW) was birthed to help fulfill IMNA’s vision to encourage, empower and equip First Nations people to be an impact on their communities for Christ, through relationship, discipleship and higher education.

Warriors Empowering Warriors
Join us again in July 2013

“The Warriors Conference was a supernatural encounter with God for the youth movement happening in the world today. Soaking in God’s presence is a good description of what happens in a Warriors Worship Experience. Never under-estimate my kids, your kids worshipping with power at a Warriors event! They will come out on fire for God’s presence!”

Chris Allen
Commissioning Native Leaders for Kingdom Impact

Pictured are the 2012 Warriors from the W. E. W. gathering in Cherokee, North Carolina. Tribal members from 7 reservations participated.

Erik Bledsoe

Chris Allen prays with Choctaw Warrior, Keith Riggen

Choctaw Warrior Aleyah Sockey prays with her youth leaders from the Hopewell Baptist Church, Mississippi

Johnny Hughes prays with Warriors
Indian Ministries of North America just completed the 4th year of their summer youth mentoring program, RELEASE. This year’s team of 12 was comprised of teens and adults, representing 5 different tribes from North America.

The team started in Hammon, Oklahoma at IMNA’s Grace Point Ministry Center. Throughout the 2 week period, the team performed work tasks at the facility and participated in revival services each evening. Each day the team joined together in intensive Bible studies and prayer, searching out the depth of an intimate relationship with God.

A great move of God began to occur throughout the weeks and we witnessed both Native and non-Native churches of various denominations coming together in unity, worshipping and seeking the fullness of God’s Spirit. The team saw salvations and several rededications in the altar services. One night, while the team was praying in the altar, a Cheyenne elder came rushing into the sanctuary with suffering from the pain of an apparent heart attack. He was desperate for our prayers, and in the next few moments, the pain ceased and he came in the next morning and declared that the doctors could find nothing wrong with his heart. He rejoiced at the
the awesome healing power of Jehovah Rapha. This was only one of many testimonies that the team heard throughout their summer experience.

Following the time in Hammon, the team had the honor of worshipping with Rabbi Curt Landry and his congregation at the House of David in Fairland, Oklahoma. This was the first time that most of the team had experienced a Messianic Jewish worship service. They were blessed by the blowing of the shofar, the Jewish dance and a powerful word from the Rabbi. Following the service, the team gathered around the Mikveh, an immersion pool, for a time of meditation and prayer with the Rabbi.

The RELEASE team then made their way to Ron Hutchcraft’s Warrior Leadership Summit in Missouri. This was the 4th year the team had participated in this week long discipleship training for Warriors for Christ. The teaching and worship was led by Native American leaders from across the country. This year was a record breaking number of Native young people gathering together to worship and lift up the name of Jesus. 700 young people were encouraged to walk the Warrior Way in the Power that comes from Christ and His plan for their life. Be encouraged because the Warrior Way was first walked by the ultimate warrior, Jesus Christ.
Let me say thank you to all who have been very instrumental in helping us to reach out to our First Nations People, (the Native American People). I know and believe that the Lord is moving in the hearts of our Native People. They want a spiritual change within their hearts and that's a great opportunity for us as believer's to share the Gospel of Christ.

Listen to this powerful story of a missionary who would try to reach a tribe for Christ. As all the villagers came to hear this strange visitor speak, the missionary thought he would share from the Gospel of Luke chapter 2, the Christmas story of the birth of Christ. As he was reading and began to share the story of Christ being born and that He was the Son of God, an old villager that was seated on the ground interrupted him to ask this question, "How long since that great day when God's Son was born?" The missionary told him it had been approximately 2,000 years ago. The old villager pointed an accusative finger at him and said, "You say you have known for nearly 2,000 years! Who has been hiding that Book (the Bible) all this time?

Can we be held responsible for not doing whatever it takes to take the Gospel to the Native people? After all they are the original people of this great country. So many of us think that the Native people have heard the Gospel, but many have never even heard of Christ and what He came to do for them.

I am thankful for what is done to reach across the world to other ethnic groups, but I must be honest and ask why does our home missions get such a small portion of many budgets when it comes to missions in our own country? I have been in the ministry for nineteen years and worked with many different tribes across America and some in Canada. I have seen so many Natives discouraged, feeling like they have been forgotten. Throughout those years, I served as pastor of three different churches and can tell you that as a Native American Pastor, I felt what the Native people felt like when it seems you have been forgotten. I don't want to sound like I'm bitter or upset when I tell you that I felt very alone serving as a pastor to the Native churches. Very seldom was I able to go to district functions as the finances were not there to take my family. I have to be very honest here; I very seldom heard from anyone in the fellowship or the leadership which made me feel very alone and forgotten. Why am I saying all this? It is not to make anyone feel guilty, but to say that I know what it's like to feel forgotten and alone.

The Native American people are in the greatest need of a Revival today that only God can bring, but He will use those who believe for

Continued of next page
The leadership and volunteers of Indian Ministries of North America would like to extend our sincere condolences to the family of Rev. James E. Castello. He went home to be with the Lord on Saturday, June 23, 2012. He was an ordained Bishop with the Church of God and a pastor of the Lakeview Church of God for over 21 years.

Bro. Castello was highly involved with IMNA and served as a member of the Board of Directors for several years. He truly had a passion for the Native people and a deep desire to see a revival spread throughout the reservations. His love for people and his great sense of humor always brought a smile to those he served.

He traveled with IMNA during the days of the “big yellow convoys” of box trucks that would drive across the country delivering supplies and Christmas gifts to needy families on various reservations. His willingness to serve in the early years of IMNA helped build a foundation of ministry that will span for generations to come.

James was married to his loving wife of 43 years, Phyllis Castello and has one son, Tom Castello and wife, Nena, all of Cleveland, Tennessee. Memorials can be made in the memory of James to: Indian Ministries of North America, Inc., P.O. Box 3472, Cleveland, TN 37320.
A partnership between IMNA and the First Baptist Church of Jackson, South Carolina provided a Vacation Bible School for the Hopewell Indian Baptist Church. The church is located in the community of Standing Pine, a section of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Reservation, located near Carthage, Mississippi. In addition to the VBS, the men also completed repairs and renovations to the church property. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped show the love of Christ to the Hopewell church family.

**VBS**

**CHRISTMAS IS COMING**

Now is the time to start thinking about IMNA’s annual Christmas celebrations throughout the country. We partner with several organizations and ministries to insure that hundreds of Native American families receive Christmas blessings of food, clothing and gifts for the children. It appears that we will be serving approximately 1500 children and their families this Christmas season.

**We need your help!**

Christmas celebrations begin December 1 in Hammon, Oklahoma, and then we will make our annual trip to the Southwest. We will need hundreds of toys and personal gifts for ages 12 and under. This includes infant supplies and gifts for special needs youth. We will also be needing gifts for the homeless and senior citizen centers.

**The deadline for collections will be November 16.**

If you are interested in accompanying the Christmas team for this trip, please contact the IMNA office at 423.479.3831 or email to JohnnyHughes@indianministries.org.

*Spaces are limited.*

**Don’t Miss out on Your Blessing! Contact IMNA offices NOW!**
Sunflower Seed Coffee

empty sunflower hulls

1. Brown empty hulls of sunflowers in small frying pan. Watch them carefully so that they do not burn.
2. Grind the browned hulls finely.
3. For each cup of coffee, steep 1 T (or more to taste) ground hulls in 1 cup boiling water for 3 minutes.
4. Drink plain or sweetened with honey.

Fried Cherokee Squash Bread

2 summer squash, diced
water
1 c corn meal
1/4 c buttermilk
1 egg

Cook squash in water until soft; leave 3/4 c. water in pot. Combine other ingredients with squash and water; mix together. Fry in hot oil until golden brown.

Blueberry Bannock (Indian Biscuits)

24 ounces of fresh blueberries
1 cup maple sugar (available at food co-ops)
3-1/2 cups shortening
5 cups flour
4 teaspoons baking powder
6 eggs

Recipes for Blueberry Bannock, a fried biscuit, can be found in many American Indian cookbooks, says Sharon Shuck of Duluth. This version offered by Shuck, a Fond du Lac tribal elder, is quite old and can be eaten as a dessert or as bread with a meal. Press the blueberries to obtain approximately 1/2 cup juice. Mix all the dry ingredients (flour, maple sugar and baking powder). Put shortening in a deep frying pan and heat. Beat the eggs with the blueberry juice to get a cream. Mix the cream with dry ingredients and add blueberries. Drop this dough in hot oil, one tablespoon at a time, and brown. Flip over and lightly brown the other side. When all sides are lightly browned, place on paper towel for a few minutes for oil to drain. Serve hot.
Yield: makes about 4 dz

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Ways to get involved with the ministry of IMNA:
Prayer, talents/skills, finances and trips

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