

Spur Ministries, Inc. Newsletter April 2016

“The lost and abandoned puppies are taught by the older sheep dogs!”, said Clifford Bahe, a Navajo friend of mine out of White Cone, Arizona. I asked Clifford earlier about why there are so many pups around their houses and church, while watching a scraggly puppy following an older sheep dog. He said, “People drive down the road and drop off the litter of pups alongside of the road leaving them behind. Somehow the puppies find their way over here to the house and we feed them and they start following the older sheep dogs. Later on the puppies become trained sheep dogs.”

This reminded me of the parable that Jesus told about the lost sheep and how the owner left the 99 and went after the one lost or wandering sheep. Once the owner found the sheep he put it on his shoulders and went home. Calling his friends and neighbors together he asked them rejoice with him, for he had found his lost sheep.

I started thinking of the lost sheep (people) and the lost puppies, (future leaders, ministers who could have become sheep dogs) on the Navajo Reservation. The New Testament writer Luke uses the word lost, *Apollymi*, which means to utterly destroy, decimate, ravage, demolish, obliterate but not annihilate. This word can also mean to lose, be deprived of, like the sheep lost in Luke 15:4, or even to lose one's own soul. The verb does not denote extinction or annihilation, but only dissolution, devastation, a state of ruination. Another meaning is to be lost to the owner; of those who wander away and are lost as the sheep straying in the desert. Moses even mentioned, if you see your brother's ox or sheep straying, do not ignore it but be sure to take it back to him. (Neighbor responsibility; do not ignore it!)

I tried to ignore my “neighbor responsibility” of the lost puppy, wandering sheep on the Navajo reservation. The forgotten people up in the Former Bennett Freeze Area, north of Flagstaff, AZ and east of Tuba City, Arizona. Navajo people in the Former Bennett Freeze Area, (FBFA) have been forgotten, left behind, decimated, ravaged, obliterated. Some Navajo families even feel they have been suffering to extinction or even a state of ruination. Many of the people have lost faith and trust in the United States government; the Navajo Nation government and the local Chapter house officials. Churches are limited to meeting their needs. Nothing has been done over the past 50 years since the Navajo-Hopi Land dispute started. Finally, the dispute was settled and now the Navajo and Hopi can start to develop their land. In the past 50 years there are no new water lines, electric lines, septic and even roads. Houses have not been built or repaired and many homes are overcrowded. The area seems to be like a disaster relief zone.

The past few months I have been ready to give up the ministry, frustrated, burned out; felt like I was losing the battle while families asking for help which Spur Ministries couldn't provide due to lack of volunteers and funding. Somehow I was invited to one of these meetings with the Navajo Nation officials about the Former Bennett Freeze Area and they were interested on how non-profits can help Navajo families with houses. They want me to be a leader!? (Okay God what is going on here?)

I asked God how can I be a sheepdog to those whom He has placed in my life? I became involved with teaching the book of Haggai at White Cone Church where Clifford attends. They told me no one was teaching them Bible Study for more than a year. We have been doing a Hebrew word study and

seeing what Navajo words speak clearly to them. It so happens that one of the attendees knows how to write Navajo and has been teaching us how to speak it. So an older Navajo teacher is teaching me a dissolution pup. What is interesting in the Haggai study is the prophet reminds the people to do God's work because they become self-centered and worked on their own houses and not on God's house. (Think about what you are doing.) I have also been teaching down in White River on the Apache Reservation New Testament stories to the drug rehab clients and using Greek words with Apache Bible. The men are interested in seeing how their own Native tongue comes alive today through Scripture.

I have been calling meetings with non-profit organizations to discuss the need of the FBFA. The Navajo Nation is stating that houses and jobs are the two top priorities on the list of the FBFA. Spur Ministries, Inc. cannot meet all their needs but we can start by listening to the families and see what resources are available or network them to the right people.

I take time to invest in their lives and tell them God that has not forgotten or abandoned them. He loves them and is not willing that anyone to perish; even though we might have been dropped off on the wayside like forgotten pups.

Please pray that God can reach and find the abandoned, lost stray, deprived, devastated, and ruined Navajo in the Former Bennett Freeze Area. Pray that the Shepherd finds his lost sheep or the lost puppy can be a trained sheep dog. (Leader or minister in their community.)



Sheep dog, pup

Sincerely,

Steve Thompson



Former Bennett Freeze Area

Donations can be made to: Spur Ministries, Inc. Mail checks to Spur Ministries, Inc. 3453 Spur Lane, Show Low, AZ 85901 928-205-1279 azspur2002@yahoo.com www.spurministries.com

