

MY JOURNEY FROM “SAVAGES” to ‘WE ARE ALL ONE PEOPLE’  
by Dave Neufeld, January 28, 2018

Visuals: A cross with a crucified Christ without a head  
A drum

Introduction: We enjoy the freedom of speech, freedom of association, and freedom of religion that we have in our society. How aware are we of the impact that the north American culture is having on us? For too many in the Christian sphere religion has been boiled down to what we can get out of Jesus - SALVATION - Jesus died on the cross to free me of my sin. In this milieu the mind of Jesus and the teachings of Jesus have less to do with us than the blood which saves my soul.

That is illustrated for me in this cross which I fashioned from cactus fragments gathered in the Arizona desert - the cross made from Sawara cactus and the crucified body of Teddy Bear cactus. No Head, no Mind, no Teachings necessary - just give me the blood. This kind of religion protects us from many critical issues and concerns that ravage our world today - race, poverty, war, discrimination, ecology and affluence to mention a few. Let us keep this cross in view as we talk about our relationship to the Indigenous people of Turtle Island.

“WE DID NOT KNOW!!!!!!” or

The Journey From “Savages” to “We Are All One People”

I am sharing my personal journey with and in relationship to  
The indigenous people of Canada

- 1) Cowboys And Indians - we didn't know that we were the savages
  - the explorers came to conquer
  - under the mandate of THE DICTRINE OF DISCOVERY
- 2) Visiting First Nations communities: Pauingassi, Little Grand, Matheson Island, Pine Dock - a unique people with a unique spiritual heritage
- 3) Visiting an archaeological site in northern Ontario
  - Iroquois Long Houses - containing artefacts from south and central America - international and intercontinental trade
- 4) Native Ministries Board

- getting to know many communities and individuals - experiencing Their pain and their suffering

5) North Battleford

- Legal Aid - representing different people in court
- setting up a thrift store - requested by a circle of indigenous women
- setting up a day care centre - requested by that same circle
- setting up a drop in centre - together with indigenous persons

6) On the road from North Battleford to Herschel

- Car broke down - many passed by - an aboriginal man stopped

7) At Herschel:

- Pete Wiens showed me the petroglyphs
- setting up Ancient Echoes - the indigenous history of the area is not only important to the past but also to the future
- encounter with elders : I would not be there but the eagle would be
- encounter with a family from Calgary - listen to the autistic child
- encounter with an archaeologist - maybe 5000 years old
- encounter with two First Nations men from northern Saskatchewan  
Calendarization - stones marking an historical event
- encounter with the Gros Ventres from Montana - this was our land
- June 16-18 The Shared Land
  - we are facing a crisis with our children and youth
  - we need your help
  - we came in peace and we leave in peace
  - praying and singing together
- sing "We Are All One People"

8) We who are descendents of penniless immigrants to this land are now part of the top five percent in the world's population.

"If you have any savings, can afford to spend money on a hobby or A vacation, own a home and own two cars in any condition, you are in The top 5% of the world's population"

9) After 23 years a return visit - reclaim the Medicine wheel site

At Stranrare - Winston Walking Bear

10) Things we can and must learn from our indigenous neighbours

- a profound and all pervasive sense of creation and our role in it
- the true spirit of giving - the wealthiest person is the one who gives

Away everything

- we are also treaty - they live by those treaties -

Even though they were forced into them by starvation

- we are trying to avoid them because they might threaten our prosperity

- the treaties were agreements by two parties to live in peace

And to share this land - Turtle Island

- we need to relearn what it means to give witness to Jesus

As opposed to destroying cultures different from our own

- “We have no trouble with the teachings of Jesus, but

We have a real problem with the way the church has

Treated us.”

Sing again one verse of “We are all one people”