



THE IBC EPISTLE

A newsletter published by Indian Bible College of Northern Arizona



Extension: Taking “Initiative” to Reach Out in Love

By Dr. Jason Koppen (President)

This is the final article in a four-part series on each of IBC’s four strategic initiatives: Expansion, Accreditation, Vocation, and Extension.

In the Gospels we see Jesus constantly and actively reaching out to others, then calling his followers to do the same (Luke 10:1; Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8). As a college, IBC seeks to express the heart of God here, near, and far. Originally, this was exclusively defined as off-campus classes, i.e. “extension studies”. IBC has offered these kinds of in-person classes for decades, but since 2010 has sustained an ongoing commitment to offering an 18-credit Christian Ministry Certificate, designed for the lay person who needs training in the basics of Bible study, theology, and ministry. Since the COVID pandemic this has primarily taken the form of **live online hybrid classes** where students “attend” the class via Zoom. This semester there are fourteen students taking classes from five states.

Recently, IBC has expanded the definition of this initiative to include all kinds of ministry activities off-campus, including (but not limited to):

- **Ministry Partnership Participation** in such activities as the Mission Connexion Conference (missionconnexion.global/southwest2024/) and in the Western Regional of the Association of North American Missions (we are hosting the annual gathering on our campus for the first time this year).
- **Developing Print Resources**, such as the Indigenous Voices Journal (volume 3 is in the works; volumes 1 and 2 are available on our website at indianbible.org/news/the-indigenous-voices-journal/) and the *Native Mending the Soul* workbook (see article on page 3).

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- **Ministry Trips** like the annual spring Ministry Immersion Trip, recent anniversary celebrations, and international trips (see below).

One area we are working to develop and improve upon is our ability to support graduates in their ministries. Every year IBC sends out more graduates trained in its Core Values (approved in 2013; see indianbible.org/core-values/) who need field and prayer support, financial assistance, fellowship, and team building. We are actively working to develop a more robust approach to **ongoing graduate support**.

What a delight it is to see staff and students having such an impact beyond the “walls of campus”! Please pray for IBC in its ongoing efforts to impact indigenous ministry across the continent—and eventually, all around the world!

Dr. Jason Koppen,
IBC President



Reports from IBC's 2024 International Trips

In July, third-year student Johanna and I were special guests at a Christian camp called L'Arcada in the valley of Sant Miguel de Campmajor in the Girona province of Spain. For two weeks, we were the “chiefs” for Indios Camp. In the mornings, Johanna led “Navajo Time”, where she taught the children how to weave little rugs. Afterwards I would teach the kids to be “good hunters” at archery. Every night we had a “Pow Wow” where we taught the kids different phrases in Navajo and Apache, told them stories, or just spent time having fun with them. I love that it took us flying halfway across the world to sleep in a tepee, but I also love that many of the kids took the time to stop and talk with us. They would practice saying hello to us in Navajo and Apache, and ask us questions about our cultures. A big takeaway for me was seeing the Lord work through the counselors and leaders, which reminded me of my time at Broken Arrow Bible Ranch. I was reminded of the Lord's omnipresence and moved by His love for all. We continue to pray for L'Arcada in their growing pains and the need for more leaders as well as more helping hands in and out of the camp season. *(Cecilia Lewis, IBC graduate staff)*



Johanna and Cecilia



Kyon and Martha (far right) and Aaron (third from left) with their team serving at a migrant workers' camp

I had the privilege of heading south of the border for an eleven-day whirlwind trip this summer with IBC students Kyon and Aaron, as well as veteran missionary Mike Hendricks and several other men from the States. The purpose of our trip was to survey the options for future IBC involvement in ministry to indigenous migrant workers. Most of the workers are young indigenous men who come from villages far from the fields within which they work, harvesting crops primarily for the United States. We partnered with several local Mexican churches, working with the pastors and usually a group from the church. The migrant workers came from all over Mexico. Most spoke Spanish as a second language. We were sponsored by Global Recordings Network which provided tracts, scripture portions, a Christian film for viewing, and a business card with information on the 5 Fish app which contains the gospel in hundreds of indigenous languages. The opportunities are vast! *(Martha Gushee, IBC staff)*

Natives 2 France is an annual missions trip that challenges Native believers to experience a different culture, embrace and use our own culture for the gospel, and communicate truth cross-culturally. Many historical barriers currently prevent the gospel from reaching the hearts of the French people. During our time in France we observed the Louvre filled with art, fine dining at every street corner, and cathedrals filled with opulence, as well as the homeless, refugees, and the French peoples' own spiritual condition overlooked for the sake of their image. How do we as believers reach such a people? We use what catches their attention. Native American culture and history fascinate and intrigue the French. One day of our trip I sat and talked with a homeless man. I mentioned I was Native American and he immediately asked what I believed. Native identity provoked his soul to search for spiritual connection. During our time in France we held many presentations featuring our cultures. Through these presentations we were given the opportunity to tell others how God has transformed us. The French believers were the main ministers—we empowered them by building relationships and opening spiritual eyes, so they in turn can lead other French people to Jesus. Our trip was foreseen by the enemy, as a medicine man (shaman) had been in the same community we visited a week prior. It is imperative that we understand the importance of Native leaders in missions. If Native believers don't go to the mission field, the enemy will. Billy Graham called Native Americans a sleeping giant of spiritual awakening. Natives 2 France is at the front lines praying this ideal can be achieved through God's work in our lives. *(Josiah Butler, IBC student)*



Natives 2 France team—graduate staff members Daniel and Coreen with student, Josiah and IBC alum, Robby

New Words for a Longstanding Vision Introducing a New Name for IBC

Southwestern School of Missions (SWSM) began as a small grassroots endeavor with a student body of just four Navajo men. With a bold vision to see Native Americans empowered for effective leadership in the Church, the school has welcomed hundreds of indigenous men and women from North America and beyond through its doors over the last 65 years, expanding its horizons well beyond the Southwest. Twenty-seven years after its founding, SWSM adopted the name Indian Bible College. The new name was reflective of an exciting change in seasons for the school, which started offering bachelor's degrees in biblical studies in 1985. The name also affirmed the school's unique commitment to Native Americans of all tribal backgrounds. For almost four decades now, the school has been growing into its identity as Indian Bible College but is now growing beyond the confines of its name in an exciting way!

In the process of becoming a school that is built not only *for* Native followers of Jesus, but *by* them as well, we have recognized that young Native people are increasingly identifying themselves as *indigenous*. This word is significant not only in its meaning ("inhabiting or existing in a land from the earliest times"), but also because it is the only trans-national term that can be appropriately used to describe Native peoples from any part of the globe.

As we reaffirm our commitment to providing a biblical, relational, and transformational education to Native believers of all cultures, we are thrilled to share that as of 2025, IBC will begin operating under the name **Indigenous Bible College!** This name will function as a DBA ("doing business as"), while we retain Indian Bible College as our legal name, so you are welcome to refer us by either one – or just IBC! We are excited to grow into this new name together and pray that it will open new doors for indigenous peoples from the United States, Canada, and beyond to enjoy a biblically formed education and transformational discipleship as part of the growing IBC community.

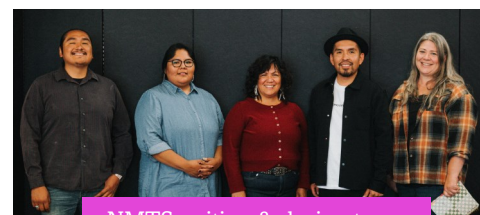
Written by Irish Noble, Director of Communications



Celebrating the Publication of the *Native Mending the Soul* Workbook!

They say that "hurt people hurt people" and conversely, "healed people heal people". That is our hope at IBC, to see healthy Native leaders bringing healing to their people and the world. At IBC we are witnesses to the impacts of the trauma and abuse our students experience. Their pain and stories reflect the state of reservations across North America. High prevalence of violence. Sexual assault rates. Historical trauma impact. Addiction. Fatherlessness. Suicide. American Indians and Alaska Natives are 2.5 times more likely to experience violent crimes and at least 2 times more likely to experience rape or sexual assault crimes than any other race. Our experience is that over 95% of young Native Americans have experienced abuse.

We must be willing to walk alongside students as they face the healing process as they grow into the leaders God calls them to be. Since 2013, *Mending the Soul* (MTS; mendingthesoul.org) has offered healing through the hope and freedom only Jesus can provide. After several years of utilizing MTS the original authors recognized the need for a uniquely "Native" process of healing. They asked IBC to help write a new workbook to address this need. This began a collaboration between Native staff members from various tribal backgrounds who had walked through and/or facilitated MTS groups. We knew we had our work cut out with questions like "How do we represent all tribes, not just those of the Southwest?" and "How do we reflect this through content and design?" Unique areas of healing were identified, such as God and culture, historical trauma, and the generational effects of boarding schools. The process extended beyond written content to design and artwork, as we wanted to be sure that any indigenous person could pick up these materials and see themselves represented on the pages. Throughout the process we saw God's hand on our journey, uniquely but corporately equipping us with writing skills, design experience, and even financial provision from donors. There is no question that Jesus's heart of healing is for our Native people!



NMTS writing & design team

Collaboration on the process has been a journey of healing in and of itself. As stated by artist, Christina Tree (Navajo), "I was honored to contribute my artwork, which resonates with many Native tribes in their journeys of pain and healing. It felt deeply meaningful to be a part of this process." Designer Daniel Esplin (Navajo), "Collaborating on the *Native Mending the Soul* workbook was an incredible journey, working alongside fellow Native believers to craft a resource uniquely suited for Indigenous Christians. The highlight for me was designing the book, infusing it with Native artwork, pictures, and stories that speak to the indigenous Christian, making it a healing guide truly tailored for our people with Jesus at the center."

After four years of writing, designing, and beta testing the *Native Mending the Soul* (NMTS) workbook, we are excited to share that it has finally gone to print and will soon be available to the public! (Email info@indianbible.org for information on purchasing a copy). We are already witnessing the healing results of this collaboration and participants have shared how they see themselves represented in both content and design. May our Native people represent "healed people, healing people" for generations to come.

Written by Coreen Esplin, Dean of Women and NMTS Team Member

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Praise & Prayer

- ⇒ **Praise God** for the publication of the *Native Mending the Soul* workbook! **Pray** that IBC can effectively get the word out to Native ministry leaders about this important resource.
- ⇒ **Praise God** for the three teams of Native staff and students that traveled to minister internationally this summer. **Pray** for further opportunities for IBC students to minister cross-culturally, both at home and abroad.
- ⇒ **Praise God** for the 22 full-time students and 20 part-time students taking classes at IBC this semester! **Pray** that each would grow in their love for God and their understanding of God's love for them.
- ⇒ **Praise God** for the eleven work teams who generously offered their time and energy to improve IBC's campus over the summer. Please continue to **pray** with us for the opportunity to purchase additional homes in our neighborhood for student housing.
- ⇒ **Praise God** for the marriage of two graduate staff members Joshua Ortiz and Brina Lee (pictured right). **Pray** for them as they follow Jesus together as a couple, and prayerfully consider financially supporting their ministry at indianbible.org/give/.



IBC's Origin Story

As an extension of our 65th anniversary celebrations in the spring, we have been working on a video telling the “origin story” of IBC, starting in 1958 with founder Gordon Fraser. Check out the finished video at indianbible.org/our-story.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this project!

