

Do Justice

On Feb. 11, 2008, I received a call from Linda Connors an elder from the United Dakota Presbyterian Church that our son Dwight 52 had passed away that morning.

It began a year that has changed my life. I came out of retirement and never had a busier year. One of the things that stands out in my mind is being the Dakota Presbytery delegate to the General Assembly in San Jose, California.

The theme for the gathering is engraved in my mind:

- Do Justice
- Love Kindness
- Walk humbly with your God

In trying to live by that scripture, the injustice of the Presbyterian Church regarding the Indian Church struck me. Since The Presbyterian Home Mission board is no longer in existence, there is a great disparity in providing support for the missionary clergy to this ethnic church. In some cases, the financial support is 10% of what other presbyteries and Oversea Workers receive.

Unless a new Strategy is found, the ministry of the Presbyterian church will be greatly restricted. The Dakota church will go on. It is made up of a people who are very proud to be Indians in spite of broken treaties, broken homes, and broken lives. Because of Christ, they are alive with hope, honor and love.

The Dakota Church will go on with or without outside help, but the burden could and should be shared with the larger church.

In love and hope,

Jerry Swanson

Easter keeps Dakota Church pastor busy

By Louis Montclair

For the Fort Peck Journal

Pastor Jerry Swanson has been very busy this Easter. Moderator of the Makaicu Dakota Presbytery Church in Riverside , Swanson started his Easter at 6:30 a.m. with a sunrise service at Riverside .

At the Riverside church, at 10:00 there were over 50 cars in the parking lot, and well over 100 people inside the building. During the service, Swanson performed 13 baptisms and communion before going to Fort Kipp for 2 baptisms and for communion. There was a good crowd and Red Eagle memorial Presbyterian.

After his service there, he went immediately to the Chelsea Church, where groups of people were already gathered for the service. About 40 people were there, and Swanson did 15 baptisms.

From there, he went for the final service at the United Dakota Church in Wolf Point , where he baptized triplets for the first time.

In his 27 years as a Presbyterian Pastor, he has never been so busy as he was this Easter, Swanson said. Though some of the people who wanted to be baptized weren't able to be there, Swanson said that more baptism ceremonies are being scheduled.

It's not over, it's just the beginning, he said.

Swanson said that anyone with questions should call his cell phone at (406) 650-2272.

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