



# Manos de Dios, Hands of God Ministries

*Sharing the message of Jesus with indigenous people in northern Arizona and Mexico*

## May 2012 Newsletter



### ***Choices...Yes, we have them. Then again, no we don't...by Dennis***

If you are a Christ follower the above is not a contradictory statement. We do have a choice in following Christ. We can choose to follow Him or choose to not follow Him. But, if we do choose to follow Jesus we don't have a choice as to which scriptures we think are ok for us to follow and then ignore the ones we think don't apply to us. That choice we don't have. We need to accept His Words and accept that they all apply to us. Now after we choose Jesus and accept all His Teachings, that's when choosing poses a problem in our life. We know what we are supposed to do but sometimes we choose to disobey.

1 Corinthians 16:13, says *"Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong."* I believe this verse applies to making correct choices and calls us to action! So what does this have to do with this month's newsletter? A lot! For the short time we have served on the Apache reservation we have seen many people make choices that turned out to be disastrous.



**Christina Williams**  
(above), age 15, and  
her grandmother,  
Ursula Banashely  
(below) were  
murdered on the  
reservation April 23



Others have made the right choice no matter how dangerous the consequences were.

God tells us to stand up, be strong in our faith and take a stand for what is right. And our community leaders tell us to be strong and fight for our communities and for justice. Just recently a 15 year old young lady on the reservation did just that. She was gang raped by four young men and threatened to not report it to the police or she would be killed. This young lady was a Christian, baptized at 9 years old and active in the community youth program in Whiteriver. She chose to do the right thing. She reported what happened and gave the names of her attackers. The following Thursday she attended the young peoples' message at the White Mountain Apache Christian Church and then went across the street to a safe place where kids can hang out (The Kennel). Her mood was described as

edgy, stressed and volatile. Then just a few days later she was found beaten to death along with her grandmother. Her choice cost two lives.

This young lady stood up for what was right and did not back down and it cost her her life. Jesus did not back down and it cost Him His life as did some of the Apostles that did not back

(continued on page 2)

***"And what  
do you benefit  
if you gain the  
whole world  
but lose your  
own soul?  
Is anything  
worth more  
than your  
soul?"***

**Matthew  
16:26 (NLT)**

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down and it cost them their lives: Peter (was crucified), James the son of Zebedee (was killed), Andrew (crucified), Thomas (was killed by a spear), James <half brother of Jesus> (was thrown from the temple and then stoned), and Jude (killed by unknown means). I wonder, would we do the same when faced with possible death? What would we choose?

I assist at a men's Bible study program on Tuesdays at the WMACC (White Mountain Apache Christian Church) where all men (sober or not) are welcome. At the Bible study they are reminded of choices they make and the consequences that come after the choice is made. One intoxicated young man I had an opportunity to pray with stated he wanted to go home but his wife would stab him again (showed me a healing stab wound). I suggested that he make a good choice: sober up before you go home. Don't abuse your wife when you get there and try to work things out. Of course his other choice was to stay drunk and most likely maintain the same lifestyle. The choice was up to him. I pray he has made the best choice and is following God's principles as he works to put his life back together.

I also attended a devotional for the older teen age boys at AICM (American Indian Christian Mission) school and my part of the discussion was on choices and friendships. I reminded these young men, Christian or not, that the choices they make now and who they hang around with may affect the rest of their lives. They can choose to follow Christ and have life or they can walk the way of the world. We discussed that on the Rez walking with the world could mean taking someone's life or forfeiting your own life in a variety of ways.

The violence, depression, hopelessness and the thoughts of having a bleak future are in epidemic proportions to many of the Native Americans on the Reservation(s). I am finding that many are not in need of food, clothing or housing, or even a good education because they have those things available to them already. The problem is that many of them make bad choices and the results keep them defeated. The choice they need to choose is Jesus and His ways. And we are praying for opportunities to share this Good News!!

The right choice is often difficult! I don't always make the right choice even though I am blessed in more ways than I can imagine. That is why we can't give up on our fellow Americans, Native Americans living on reservations. They need help with understanding that they have a choice and how to choose Jesus! \* And we need to be willing to help them as they struggle with daily choices and learning to walk with the Lord.

We ask that you please pray for strength and direction for Lucy and me. And please pray that the Native Americans choose Jesus and LIFE no matter how difficult it may be for them.



**Bible Study member prays  
with intoxicated man outside  
of WMAC Church**

**\* “You adulterers! Don't you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again: If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God.”**

**James 4:4 (NLT)**





## Love and Respect DVD Conference attendees at American Indian Christian Mission (AICM)

**“Getting off the ‘crazy cycle’ (marital conflict) means choosing to put on respect and love toward our spouse even when we feel they don’t deserve it!”...Love and Respect conference**

*What an awesome privilege to encourage folks in their marriage relationship! God has taught us so much and we are delighted when we see couples understand and commit to live according to God’s principles! Three of the couples who attended this conference are full-time ‘Kingdom workers’ at AICM. As their relationships are strengthened they are better prepared to do God’s work on a daily basis. Praise God for the way He is moving in our lives!*

*...Lucy and Dennis*

For more information about Love and Respect conferences & resources go to **[www.LoveandRespect.com](http://www.LoveandRespect.com)**



# The power of encouragement!

We learned the importance of encouragement when we first started to do mission work in Mexico. I realized “God encourages me and I have an opportunity and responsibility to encourage others. It is powerful to be encouraged!” We began to take seriously this responsibility especially among indigenous pastors. We found that they had few ‘friends’ and appreciated having a couple to talk with and share some of the struggles of ministry. We prayed with them regularly and this so encouraged them! We even named our missionary outpost in El Diamante, Sonora “Campo Animo” (Camp Encouragement).

We now have the privilege and opportunity to encourage ministry workers in the White Mountains of Arizona. God has opened doors for relationships with pastors and their wives, mission school house parents and staff, missionaries, volunteers plus others. Simply asking, “how can we pray for you?” is so impactful. Most importantly, we take time to pray with them immediately! Encouragement! Such a gift! We challenge you to find a way to encourage someone today!

## American Indian Christian Mission (AICM) Staff changes



(above) Gene & Sherry in front of their staff cabin at AICM. (below) Sherry with child on the Blue Bus ('Jesus Bus') in McNary on the Apache Reservation



*Gene and Sherry Brenneman have been on staff at American Indian Christian Mission for 15 years. For 8 of those years they have headed up the Apache Christian Connection “Blue Bus” ministry, an evangelical outreach to children on the White Mountain Apache Reservation. They have announced that they will be ‘retiring’ from their position at the end of July. They will be moving to Albuquerque to be closer to family.*

*Wow, what an impact this couple has made on hundreds of Native American children and their families! They will be so missed! All are praying for just the right couple to come ‘fill their shoes’ at AICM. If you or someone you know might be interested in applying go to [www.AICM.org](http://www.AICM.org) and check out the brief job description on the home page. You can download an application on the website, as well. Other positions that are open for the fall include house parents and school teachers. We are so grateful to Gene and Sherry for the welcoming friendship they have extended to us! They have taught us so much and shared many experiences with us that are invaluable to us as we learn about this very different culture. We will miss them so much and pray that God will bless them in their new home and new jobs.*

**Dennis & Lucy**

## 24 encouraged by Love & Respect Conference in Springerville, AZ



11 couples and 2 singles benefited from the teachings of the Love & Respect DVD Conference . A marriage discipleship small group is scheduled to continue to teach and instill God's principles in our marriage relationships.

### Quotes from participants:

"Thank you for bringing this teaching to us! It is so simple and yet so powerful. It is just what we needed to hear." and "God has revealed to me through this conference how to change my attitude and my words toward my husband."

Another participant said, "The weekend was summed up in our closing prayer of commitment. 'Now is a time to put a stake in the ground; to love and respect **as unto the Lord**; to look through my spouse to the Lord Jesus; marriage is a tool and a test to help me mature to become a woman of God.' (How am I going to become a godly old lady without being refined as a young one?)" Another commented "My husband didn't come, but he can already see the difference in my behavior!"



Participants view DVD conference at Calvary Hills church

**Quote from...**

**Pastor Bob Bartlett**  
**Calvary Hills Christian Fellowship**

**"Thank you, Dennis and Lucy, for coming and bringing the Love and Respect DVD teaching to our church! What a blessing it was. We were so in need of this teaching and I could not do it! Thank you so much for coming and encouraging the marriages in our church!"**

**(Pastor Bob not only pastors this church in Springerville, AZ but is a fulltime UPS driver!)**

**"May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 15:5-6**





**Lucy & Dennis Smith**

*Sharing the message  
of Jesus with  
indigenous people in  
northern Arizona  
and Mexico*

## **Contact us:**

**520-404-5045 (voice or text)**

**[GetInvolved@ManosdeDios.org](mailto:GetInvolved@ManosdeDios.org)**

## **Read and respond to **Dennis'** blogs:**

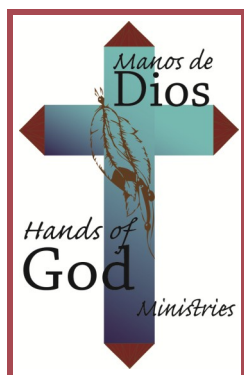
<http://manosdediosmissions.blogspot.com/>

<http://manosdediosoutreach.blogspot.com/>

<http://manosdediosspanish.blogspot.com/>

**Tax deductible contributions can be sent to:**

**2914 N Indian Ruins Road, Tucson AZ 85715 or be made on our website: [ManosdeDios.org](http://ManosdeDios.org)**



## ***Dennis and Lucy's upcoming schedule and prayer requests:***

- **June 3-6 Elementary kids camp at AICM.** Dennis & Lucy will be 'on staff' for this VBS camp for 7-9 year old Native American children.
- **June 10-12 Family Camp at Dunamis Ranch.** Dennis & Lucy will be helpers and also share some Biblical marriage principles with the Apache men and women. Apache families will tent camp at the ranch.
- **6 week Love and Respect Small Group Series for Springerville church.** Dennis & Lucy will facilitate Thursday evenings June 7 -July 19
- **"Get to know Jesus" outreach.** Dennis coordinating with White Mountain Apache Christian Church for a Saturday later in the summer.
- **Visiting pastors and missions on the Navajo reservation.** June and July

***"Thank you, Lord, for Your plan to reach precious people with Your love, grace and Hope. Please use us to share Your Good News with all those You place in front of us. Please break down strongholds, fear and hopelessness by the power of Your Spirit. Reveal Your truth to us all. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen!"***