

The Way I See It

Praying for Spirituality
by Dr. Dean Chavers

As I attended two meetings this Fall and Winter, I was astounded to hear some of the most important statements I have heard in years.

There were two things astounding about the remarks. They were made by Indian attorneys, and they were both made at Indian gaming conference.

The first attorney was Lee Bergen, who is with the Norhaus Halton Taylor law firm in Albuquerque. He made some off-the-cuff remarks during his presentation on tribal sovereignty. I found his remarks profound and very to the point.

He told a story of the Chippewa people, even though he is a Navajo. He explained that he had gone to the University of Minnesota School of Law, so spent three years with Chippewa people.

The Chippewa say the Creator made the beautiful world for the benefit of the Chippewas. The lakes, the trees, the streams, the animals which inhabited these worlds, were all made by the Creator. The Chippewa were then made to inhabit this beautiful place.

The Creator wanted the Chippewa to succeed, so the Creator made things easy for them. In particular, the Creator made it so that the sap from the maple trees would run thick and would run continuously. The maple sap would be only for the benefit of the Chippewa people.

After some time, the Creator went to see how his people were doing. As the Creator walked through the forest, there were no people there. As the Creator walked through the streams, there were no Chippewa people fishing. As the Creator walked through the rice paddies, no Chippewa were harvesting rice. There were no Chippewa working in the fields growing things. No one was doing work around the house, not taking care of any gardens.

They were all around the maple

trees, not even standing. They were all lying on their backs with their mouth open, drinking thick maple syrup straight from the trees.

The Creator said "This is not good. The people are not out there working, growing or harvesting things. I will make the maple syrup thinner and let it run only a few weeks each year."

"That way, the people will have to do other things to support themselves during the rest of the year. And they will have to cook the maple syrup down and make it thicker before they can use it. Then they will appreciate it more."

After the Chippewas understood these principles, they kept themselves busy during the other seasons. The moral of the story, Lee says, is that tribal sovereignty is not just to be used to govern people. It is to be used to preserve Indian language, religion, and culture.

If it is not used to protect Indian cultures, we will become just like the other people in the world, with no special significance to Native Traditions. These traditions are the strength of the Indian people.

If we lose these traditions, we will have the problems other people have, such as crime, drugs, alcohol disease, and loss of motivation. The principles of Indian culture should be constantly renewed. These principles are much bigger than simple questions of governance.

Several weeks later I was in Reno for another conference when I ran into my old friend Dennis Chappabity. He is from Oklahoma, but has been living in Sacramento for many years, where he practices Indian law. "I want to talk to you when you have time," he said.

Later the next day Dennis Preston Nelson (a tribal chairman from Susanville, CA) and I had a talk about the topic of spirituality for Indian people.

Dennis, a Comanche, wrote me later "Our way of dealing with the beauty and harshness of a world guided

by the hand of Nature gave us a special way of giving thanks to the Creator that acknowledged our "relation" to seen and unseen forces we are bound to respect."

"We prayed to the Creator for order in all natural things so our Tribe could prosper and endure. The natural consequence of praying to the Great One for his kindness and benevolence in guiding the Order of the Cosmos is that a person reaches an overpowering comprehension of his or her 'status' in existence of things. Native prayer also naturally guides you to reach an overpowering realization that you are entirely dependent on each of those other persons around you who constitute your family, band, or clan, and that they are equally dependent on you."

"Knowing one's place in the order of the world and the heavens and giving thanks and prayer to the Creator is what defines Native American 'spirituality'."

"This 'spiritual' dilemma takes on dramatic proportions when viewed against the backdrop of increasing signs that many of our Native people are measuring their individual worth and value on a very basic scale that uses material wealth as the standard."

"We can easily comprehend that a lot of money can give you unparalleled power and authority. On the other hand, it is extremely difficult for us to see that we should measure our individual values under standards that have their roots in the uniqueness of each of our tribal histories and the collective view of their place in the order of things."

"I was raised among the old traditional Comanches in Oklahoma. My Grandfather Otis came every day to visit us where he could talk Comanche, laugh, and interact with all of us young kids. He had a complete understanding of his 'place' in the order of the universe."

"He and his Peyote People shared prayers on many Saturday evenings. Their songs would mysteriously and magically travel miles to be heard by others of their same spiritual views. Those old guys really knew how to depend on each other to get by day to day."

"Man-made laws only create power for the leadership. The only trust responsibility our ancestors had was with the Creator."

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NEWS OF NUTRITION

Study Shows Sardines Inhibit Breast Cancer

(NAPS)—Ever think of sardines as small fry? A recent study may add a lot to the stature of this tiny fish from Norway.

The study found that by making small changes in their diet—like adding a few of these small fish—women may be able to inhibit the onset and growth of breast cancer.

Researchers in the study, published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, discovered that a polyunsaturated fatty acid found in fish oil, omega-3, actually changes the composition of breast tissue for the better.

Dr. Dilprit Bagga, one author of the paper, said "There are laboratory indications that (omega-3) does inhibit breast cancer, both by preventing it and by reducing tumor size where the cancer already exists."

Omega-3 fatty acids are found primarily in fish, with the highest concentrations of the polyunsaturated fatty acids found in sardines, mackerel, tuna and salmon. Laboratory studies have shown that a type of polyunsaturated fatty acid (PUFAs) called omega-6, primarily found in vegetable oils, shortening and other foods with high corn oil content, are metabolized into prostaglandins (hormone-like substances) that promote the growth of cancer cells.

"By increasing the ratio of omega-3 PUFAs relative to omega-6 PUFAs, we can inhibit the growth of cancer cells," said Dr. Bagga.

According to researchers at UCLA's Jonsson Cancer Center, women in Japan who follow traditional Japanese diets have a relatively low incidence of breast cancer. Yet when those Japanese women come to the United States and adopt Western diets, their fre-



A diet high in fish oils, such as those found in sardines, has been shown to inhibit the onset and growth of breast cancer.

quency of breast cancer may equal that of American women within a single generation.

Dr. John Glaspy, senior author of the article and center member, says that "at least one aspect of human breast composition in American women can be altered to approximate the breast composition of women in certain Asian and European countries. In those countries the incidence of breast cancer is much lower than here."

In the study, 25 women with breast cancer adopted a three-month diet heavy in soy products, fish oils and a variety of vegetables, including green, leafy vegetables, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cauliflower and carrots.

The paper considered only the results of fish oil intake, but also found that the diet produced a small, but statistically significant decrease in mean weight of nearly three pounds in three months.

An earlier study, *Fish Consumption and Breast Cancer Risk: An Ecological Study*, published in *Nutrition and Cancer*, also found that omega-3 has a protective role against breast cancer.

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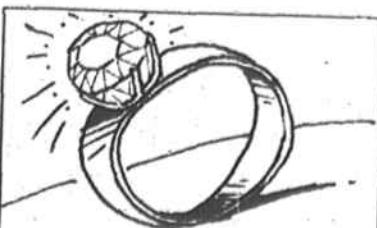
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This little church is trying to raise money to purchase an old house to convert it into a church home. They started their fund with what they had in the treasury: \$300. Their rise up the ladder toward the \$30,000 needed can be seen in the picture at left.

Drive down Jones Street in Pembroke (behind Bo's Supermarket) and watch the fund grow. **FEEL the joy!**

See below the people who helped this week push the red marker up. If you can help push the red marker up, it will be gladly accepted and the Lord will bless you.

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