



Casting the Heritage for Mission

Seeing Youth Freed From Generational Pain into a New Way Forward

BY DAVID RURIK

Curtis Ivanoff knows the mission of the Church in Alaska intimately. His great-grandfather translated for the first Covenant missionaries in Alaska and became one of the first converts. Now Ivanoff serves as the Alaska Conference Superintendent working to cast vision for how the Covenant will engage in the mission of Christ in the state.

What Ivanoff also knows is pain. On October 23, 2016 the Alaska Dispatch News published an article titled "Presbyterian Church apologizes at AFN for Boarding School Abuses." In an event that Ivanoff described as "A step in a good direction" the executive presbyter of the Presbytery of the Yukon, Rev. Curt Karns offered an official apology for the ways in which missionary (in conjunction with US government) efforts and specifically boarding schools, missed the mark.

The Anchorage Federation of Natives received the apology with gratitude as Karns described the gathering as the right place to take a first step toward reconciliation. The Presbyterian Church is not the only group responsible for abuses in the Native Alaskan community over the course of history, though this article focused on their particular message.

There is a lingering effect from the painful way Alaska Native society was changed that impacted the culture and people in deep ways. ***"Each person bears God's image and recently I have been encouraged to consider how different peoples reflect God's glory in unique ways. It is good to confess and renounce the messages that the apology rightfully recognized missed the mark. That is participating in what Jesus has done, tearing down dividing walls of hostility and pointing us to the vision of his gospel - peace and unity,"*** Ivanoff said.

One of CYAK's key markers is addressing generational cycles of pain. Just as errors have prompted some to avoid the church, positive movements within the broader church in Alaska are working towards the vision Ivanoff describes.

It is CYAK donors and partners that drive the mission to bring students closer to the heart of Christ. You see it as an imperative to seek out the way of Christ for students from Alaska who come from mixed historical backgrounds culturally, spiritually and socio-economically.

You provide the mission focus that allows Tom Mute to flourish. Mute understands complex context of

Alaska ministry. Donors created the discipleship environment (staffing, retreats, Bible camps, etc) that equipped Mute to do mission and bring others closer to Christ. Because of partners, Mute is now staff member with CYAK and MatSu Covenant Church working to break generational cycles of pain with the mission of Christ's love.

Ivanoff knows the successes and failures related to the human element of the missionary work in Alaska, but he also knows the heart of Christ for bringing people together and empowering young people along the continuum of discipleship care that forms the foundation of CYAK's work.

Thank you for taking ownership of this critical discipling ministry. Your gift, however great or small, imparts the faith youth in Alaska need to form a new heritage of mission.

CONTINUE YOUR IMPACT TODAY

You are a part of the team that God has called together to impact youth and young adults in Alaska. When you give, you impact one student who will be part of the mission of Christ in Alaska. Thank You.

Will you continue your impact?

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Covenant Youth of Alaska is a relational outreach, discipleship and leadership ministry for Alaska youth and young adults. A ministry of the Alaska Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church, we work in partnership with 19 churches across Alaska for the cause of ministry to young people. To join our efforts or to learn more, go to www.cyak.org.