

Alaska Village Missions

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Dear Friends,

We have sad news this month regarding our dear friend and beloved former AVM Board Chairman, Scott Cardoza. Scott passed away, unexpectedly, in his sleep, on October 27 this year. Please hold up Shana and their three children during this difficult time of losing their husband and father. We are all so saddened by Scott's early departure, at age 57.



Scott first came up to Homer, from Los Angeles, in the spring of 1985, at the age of 23, with, according to him, \$200 in his pocket, and four bald tires. If you have never been to Homer, it is literally the end of the road. The Homer Spit juts out five more miles into Kachemak Bay and that is where the land ends and the sea begins.

Many young wanderers like Scott end up pitching their little tents on the beach at the end of the Spit in hopes of finding summer work at the fish processing plant.

A short while before Scott arrived, two ABI alumni, Ken and Pam Lowe, decided to spend their summer in a tent on the beach at the end of the Spit. Their motivation was to reach out to what Homer calls the "Spit Rats", or those

young people who set up camp out there every summer.

As Scott approached Homer, the Lord stepped in, and using those divine navigational tools at His disposal, guided Scott to pitch his tent right next to Ken and Pam's tent. Scott woke up his first morning in Homer hearing someone in the tent next to him welcome the new day with a loud "Praise the Lord!"

That began a close friendship between Scott and the Lowes that over time led to him being invited to church on a Sunday morning. At the end of that first service, Ken Fisher, an ABI teacher, walked up to Scott and asked him if he would like to invite the Lord into his life. Scott prayed with Ken and Ken's dad that morning and his new life began.

That fall, Scott enrolled at ABI and began growing in his new relationship with the Lord. During his third and final year of ABI, Scott married Shana, an ABI classmate.

Since then Scott and Shana have lived a life of service and ministry in many different roles. He joined the Alaska Village Missions Board of Directors in 1999. After seven years on the Board, he stepped down to devote his time to a new role at Glacier View



The Homer Spit and Kachemak Bay (from the City of Homer website)

Baptist Church as the Administrative Pastor and Youth Ministry leader. He came back on the AVM Board in 2012 and guided us through the transition period of Ray Arno's retirement. He and Shana left Homer two years ago to spend time near their son and his family in Michigan.

I am aware of three ministry leaders in Homer, including myself, that were hoping to recruit Scott for leadership roles on his anticipated return to Homer this coming year. Likely there were others who had their eye on him. In the end, the Lord had the right of refusal and had Scott in mind for a greater work. Our loss and heaven's great gain. As was said of Barnabas, we also say of Scott, *"he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith"*.

If you would like to contact Shana, her email is snscaar@icloud.com. Her phone is 907-299-3561. Her mailing address for now is 6686 Pleasantview St NE, Rockford, MI 49341. She is planning a memorial service in Homer this coming June 21.

One of our ministry strategies in the villages is taken from this scripture: *So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you."* Acts 17:22-23

There it is—Paul studied the people he was sent to reach. This was an ongoing practice with him.

In doing so, he found intersections where he could introduce the truths of scripture.

With that in mind, Duane and I attended the Alaska Federation of Natives conference in Fairbanks at the end of October. This is an annual gathering of several thousand Alaska natives and their leaders from every tribe and area of the state. There are about half a



AFN evening entertainment: Nunamiut dancers from Anaktuvuk Pass

dozen major language groups in the state, and over 200 Federally recognized tribes. Historically, the various tribes in Alaska have not always lived in peace and harmony with each other, to put it kindly. But since the 1960's, with issues threatening the very survival of these tribes, they laid aside their differences and found strength in unity.

One of the areas of most concern at the AFN conference this year was the extremely high rates of sexual abuse,

Telling the story of the wolf: Stealing the show at the AFN

violence, addiction and suicide in the villages. For example, in 2018 the rates of sexual abuse in Alaska were the highest in the nation, at four times the national rate.



Whatever the rates are in Alaska, we know it is even higher in the villages of Alaska. By anyone's point of view, these realities leave grievous wounds in the hearts of these villages. It is important for us to listen to these concerns, listen to the reasons given by the villagers as the root causes, and listen to the proposals and plans for addressing these issues. I think it is here that we will find ways to share the Lord's broken heart about the suffering and sorrow so prevalent in the villages, and to share what the Lord sees as the way to healing and life. In the Lord's own words, *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."* *John 10:10* Please pray that we will find opportunities to share the Lord's offer of life in the villages in which we serve.

This summer, while our team was in the small village of Chignik Lagoon, some of the ladies there shared their desire to start up a ladies Bible study group. In response to that request, this coming week we will be sending a team of three ladies to both Chignik Lagoon and to Port Heiden to meet with the ladies there and see how



Beth Klas (left) with the "Lydias" of Chignik Lagoon: Read Acts 16:11-15

we can best help get that started. We would appreciate your prayers for those meetings.

Now, a few needs. We are hoping that the Lord will send us someone with technical background in radio broadcast. Dave Becker has singlehandedly run our radio ministry since its inception some 40 years ago, and we would like find someone who can help share that load. If you know someone like that, please put us in contact with them.

Also, we are hoping to base a missionary family in Sand Point to help us reach out to the nearby smaller villages more effectively. Please help us make that need known in your circle of friends.

Lastly, we have a great group of students this year, a great staff of gifted teachers, and big improvements to our facilities. What we need is your help in making the Bible school opportunity known to those who are looking to grow in their walk with the Lord. If you would like us to speak in your church, or if we can make materials available to your church members, please contact us.

Thanks, Randy

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