



THE IBC EPISTLE

A newsletter published by Indian Bible College of Northern Arizona



“Work as Worship”...IBC’s Vocation Initiative

By Dr. Jason Koppen (President) and Joshua Ortiz (Director of Work)

This article is the second in a four-part series on each of IBC’s four initiatives: Expansion, Accreditation, Vocation, and Extension.

“Nothing is work unless you’d rather be doing something else!” My father drummed this slogan into the heads of myself (Jason) and my three sisters. I am truly grateful for the training I received in a strong work ethic. I paid my way through college by spending six summers working at a sawmill, learning to pray, worship, and memorize & meditate on Scripture while moving sawdust or lumber. However, in the last 15 years of living and working among Native peoples I’ve had to wrestle through a few differences between a Western work ethic and a biblical work ethic.

My (Joshua’s) story is very different. I was taught to value work and to “earn my keep,” but it was more so a means to an end. As far as resources were concerned, I learned that after all the bills were paid, I could do whatever I wanted with the rest of my earnings. Also, it did not matter what kind of work I was involved in, just as long as I made money, which then led to me making questionable decisions regarding work and money. After coming to know the Lord, and learning years later that I could worship Him through my work, I was encouraged yet challenged, because I now knew work had meaning and because my work thus far had been subpar and not benefiting the Kingdom and people.

People of all ethnicities and cultures need a biblical perspective on work. Tragically, the reservation system is essentially a welfare state, and many Native Americans are born into a mindset of dependency and entitlement. Additionally, full-time paid positions in Native ministry are rare; therefore, most IBC graduates are bi-vocational or “tentmaking” in ministry. Thus, the development of a theology of work (TOW) is essential in helping students get and keep a job and develop the skills to bring small business and employment opportunities to their own people.



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Of the four initiatives, vocation is the most recent. It was primarily initiated by John Childs, a Pioneers missionary who did community development work among the Tarahumara Indigenous people of Mexico for many years. He moved to Flagstaff in 2010 and helped develop IBC TOW classes and start the entrepreneurial micro-business, Fifth Wind, in his garage (which moved onto campus in 2016). IBC graduate Joshua Ortiz—who had been working for Fifth Wind almost since its founding—took over as Director of Work in 2018. Joshua is currently working on his master's degree in Transformational Leadership from Bakke Graduate University.

IBC's initiative of "Vocation" primarily consists of three foci:

1) **Academics**—Three TOW classes are offered at IBC: Work Pathways (required for freshmen), Ministry Funding Strategies (required for sophomores), and Business Building Strategies (an elective for upperclassmen). Learn more about these three classes at bit.ly/ibc-tow.

2) **Employment guidance**—IBC'S commitment to help students get and keep a job has had tremendous success; during the 2022-23 school year 89% of IBC students were employed, whether on campus or off campus. Life Coaches often provide support for students struggling to get a job.

3) **Entrepreneurial development through Fifth Wind**—This involves learning and engaging with the local market. Through Fifth Wind, students learn how products are funded and made, the importance of knowing the community and making connections, and finally, selling the product and handling the revenue with integrity. Entrepreneurial endeavors call for us to be creative and flexible. Visit IBC's Fifth Wind website at indianbible.org/fifth-wind-2/. Fifth Wind aims to see students develop the skills necessary to become entrepreneurs and apply these skills to their own ministries. To the left is a picture of students who are currently involved in Fifth Wind and growing in their own skill sets. Fifth Wind would not be able to function like it has without their effort and work ethic.

This initiative is a unique expression of IBC's fifth Core Value of Interdependency and Self-sufficiency (see indianbible.org/core-values/ for more information). Please continue to pray for us as we help students learn to "work as worship" and to see graduates someday bring business and industry back to their own people in the name of Jesus Christ!



Welcoming Kelly Johnson, New Learning Resource Center Director

Life for Kelly was not always easy growing up, but she treasures the memories of taking the 45-minute drive to Gallup with her mother. Close to where her mom worked was a place of solitude, escape, and refuge: the public library. Kelly loved to read and immersed herself in books. She was transported to places she had never been before and became another person, far from the world that left her with pain and brokenness. This was the beginning of how God placed a passion for libraries in her life.

At age 18, Kelly came to Jesus through Warrior Leadership Summit and then attended IBC, graduating with a Bachelor of Biblical Studies degree in 2023. When she first arrived at IBC, she was unsure of how God might use her or to what He was calling her. But she slowly began to realize her real passion was in the library. She loved organizing and being a caregiver to students by pointing them to resources they could use to succeed in their classes, and in life. She loved working with other Native students who might not have had the opportunity to experience the world of books or who never had access to a library. Her desire today is to help empower them, guiding them through the academic journey of Bible college and beyond, cultivating the skills they need to gain access to the knowledge available to them online and in books.



Kelly and her dog, Jude

Kelly is IBC's new Learning Resource Center Director as she simultaneously embarks on a new journey, pursuing an online Master of Information and Library Science degree from Saint John's University in Queens, NY.

Welcome Kelly to the staff of Indian Bible College!

Written by Martha Gushee, Faculty & Director of Alumni Relations

What students are saying...

What do you wish other people knew about IBC?

I wish they knew how great the mentoring is. I really enjoy the relational part. I wish they knew how the school focuses on spiritual growth rather than head growth. *(Shawna, freshman)*

The amazing way God is working in everyone's lives, how deep and personal you get in Spiritual Formation groups, and how Student Life staff helps us get back on track with the power of God to help us transform into leaders. *(Philemon, junior)*

IBC is about spiritual growth, not just biblical education. IBC is about community—it's not like others—it addresses hurts and anger. *(Cenovia, junior)*

That IBC is a welcoming place. That it is a place that you will be stretched and grown. It is a safe place to fail and try again. The staff and leaders are willing to come alongside in the bad days and the good days. *(Cecilia, graduate)*

2023 Volunteers on the IBC campus

The start of summer at IBC means the arrival of eagerly anticipated summer work teams. This year we had two large work teams, four small groups, and one dedicated individual volunteering their time and skills to support our projects. Facilities Manager Kornell and I (Luckie) had the privilege of working alongside them. The collective efforts of these dedicated volunteers were nothing short of impressive. They undertook a wide range of projects, such as constructing a shade house for a garden, building raised garden beds, waxing floors in the Student Center, remodeling a bathroom and kitchen in one of the housing units, and addressing numerous other maintenance needs. The teams also completed the first stage of a much-needed roofing project on the east end of the Staff Center. Tom Westing, who served with Mission Hills Church from Colorado shared, *"I love working with my hands, the trip was affordable, offered good bonding time with my peers and allowed me to help fellow believers just one state away. I look forward to returning next summer and doing another roof project."*



One of the most meaningful aspects of the work teams' presence on our campus is the opportunity for them to gain a deeper understanding of the Lord's vision and purpose for IBC in serving Native peoples. Many participants discovered the remarkable journey of IBC, supported by God's people, and realized the significance of Native reservations as a mission field. A number of students stayed on campus over the summer to engage in work and ministry and had the chance to interact with the teams, sharing meals and their personal stories. These interactions left a profound impact on both the students and work teams, creating meaningful connections and moments of inspiration. Melissa Short from the Red Mountain Community Church team shared, *"What a pleasure it has been to serve on a summer team to IBC! It was my first time and I found the staff and students so welcoming and friendly. Each person took the extra time to shake my hand and learn my name. This personal touch speaks volumes to the caliber of people and the quality of the discipleship that's taking place at IBC."*



As summer came to a close we eagerly welcomed a new set of volunteers who faithfully serve our students throughout the school year. The beginning of the fall semester is an exciting time to reconnect with generous volunteers who provide meals for our campus community on chapel days. Throughout the Fall 2023 semester, 14 different individuals and local church groups have provided lunch for students and staff on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Since IBC's campus does not have a cafeteria or food service, these volunteers are integral in providing students with access to healthy meals and meaningful times of fellowship, as well as alleviating some of the financial burden of providing all of their own meals throughout the week. Rich and Susan Howe, who have regularly travelled from Prescott, Arizona to provide meals for the last 5 years, shared, *"The blessings we as volunteers have experienced have been many...we have loved getting to know the students and watch them grow in their walk with the Lord...we have seen and continue to see relationships growing and transformations happening!"*

The fall semester is also an exciting time for freshmen to connect with Life Coaches who come alongside them during their first year as an IBC student. Life Coaches volunteer their time on a weekly basis, offering support and instilling a sense of agency and confidence in the students as they navigate the unique freedoms and challenges presented by this stage of life. DH and Emily Henry have been serving in this way for three years. When asked about their experience they shared, *"We take such joy in learning from [the students] about their cultures and how God is calling them to serve their people with the love of Christ... As Life Coaches we get to come alongside freshmen to support, encourage and empower them to set goals and take action steps to meet those goals. The best part is that we end up maintaining a relationship with them through their years at IBC."*



It is truly awe-inspiring to see God's generosity through His people. As we reflect on the volunteers of 2023, we are filled with gratitude for their dedication and hard work, the transformative experiences they had, and the remarkable impact they made on our community. We are excited about what the future holds and are eager to continue our mission of serving Native peoples together with unwavering faith and dedication.

Written by Luckie Bigman (Business Administrator) and Irish Noble (Director of Communications)

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Praise & Prayer

- ⇒ **Praise** the Lord for the ways students are learning to worship Him by their work. **Pray** that IBC would continue to help students develop a vision for bringing employment opportunities to the reservations.
- ⇒ **Praise** the Lord for all the volunteers He has called to serve at IBC to help graduate students debt free. Please **pray** that we'll see more of God's people serving to meet IBC's various needs.
- ⇒ **Praise** the Lord that IBC's healthy enrollment has filled campus housing! **Pray** for open doors to buy some of the homes that are adjacent to our campus.
- ⇒ **Praise** the Lord that 50% of IBC's staff is Native American (11 out of 22)! **Pray** for these new Native staff (including LRC Director Kelly Johnson) as they raise their support.
- ⇒ **Praise** the Lord that IBC just finished "in the black" for the 2022-23 fiscal year—the 12th year in a row! **Pray** for continued financial provision to train even more Native Christian leaders!

Indigenous Voices Volume 2

We are delighted to announce that the second volume of the Indigenous Voices Journal is now available on our website! This publication highlights the incredible academic and creative work of Indian Bible College students, drawing attention to the importance of Native voices and perspectives in the Church. This volume focuses on IBC Core Value #1—Unity in Christian Community. We hope you'll be encouraged by the words and creative expressions shared on its pages. You can access the digital version at bit.ly/iv-vol2.

