

# From American Southwest to Northwest Territories with Christ's Love

It was a huge job to accomplish in three days, but they did it. On June 14, seven people from Maranatha Fellowship CRC and other area churches, embarked on a trip to the small village of Ray in the Northwest Territories. Their mission: to build a Sunday School building for T'lichu Baptist Church, established and supported through a Navajo mission organization called Native Gospel Outreach, or NGO.

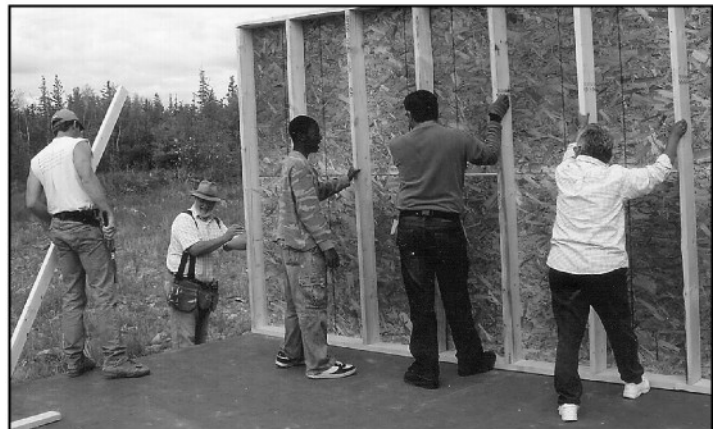
Help came from many sources. Christian Reformed Churches in Edmonton paid for the group's Edmonton hotel. The Mennonite Baptist Church in High Level, midway between Edmonton and Ray, offered food and overnight hospitality. The Maranatha congregation raised funds by holding Navajo Taco sales.

The work team members were a diverse group--Virginia Shondee, Ashanti Schmitt, Robert Slowman and Ethylene Eaton from Maranatha CRC, Mary Bacon from Christ's Church, Elizabeth Billie from a church in Beclabito, and Rev. Will Kempkes from Window Rock CRC. The youngest member, Ashanti, was only 14, and the oldest, Elizabeth, was in her seventies. A retired pastor named Donny Coulter, who joined them in Edmonton, drove them in his van to their destination, and then stayed to help.

On Wednesday morning, after a night's sleep in the church adjacent to the foundations of the planned Sunday School building, the team started building. Donny Coulter and Will Kempkes are experienced construction workers, so they took the lead. Everyone else watched carefully to see what needed to be done, and pitched in wherever they could. The team members less physically able to handle heavy work, did the cooking. Sometimes the church members and other residents of Ray also came by to lend a hand. Taking advantage of the very long northern daylight hours, the team worked over 12 hours a day for three days to raise the walls and the roof and to nail on the shingles.

A member of the team, Virginia Shondee, commented on the wonderful spirit of cooperation and sharing among the group. She also noted many small incidences of God's special blessing. One day, for example, they ran out of roofing nails and thought they would have to make an hour-long trip to Yellowknife to get more, but found a construction crew nearby who simply gave them the nails they needed.

Other highlights of the trip were a day of sightseeing in Yellowknife, and a visit to a very impressive mall in Edmonton. The team arrived home very tired, but very happy to have had this unique experience in serving God's kingdom.



Left to Right: Will Kempkes, Robert Slowman, Ashanti Schmitt, Mary Bacon, Ethylene Eaton, Virginia Shondee, Elizabeth Billie, Donny Coulter