

## The Son of Saghalee Tyee

By Black Buffalo

Taken from the book "Seeds of Promise" as told at the Edinburgh '80 meeting by a Native American named Black Buffalo:

On the Northwest coast of the United States, a number of years ago, one missionary after another had come to a particular tribe of Indians, up the peninsula from Olympia and tried to share Jesus Christ, but the old chief would not let them come on the reservation. He said, "That's the white man's religion and the white man has brought us disease, mistrust, alcohol, and jail. We want no part of that." One missionary after another tried to share the message of Jesus Christ, and the chief would have them removed from the reservation. (A reservation is the Indian land that has been granted through treaty rights.)

One day a man came. He said to the old chief, "I want to tell you a story." Indians like stories. The old chief said, "What is the story?" The man said, "It is a story about Saghalee Tyee." Saghalee Tyee in our language literally means, "The God over all." And I like that one, too. The old chief looked at him and said, "Saghalee Tyee I know. I know all the stories, I teach the children. Never heard that Saghalee Tyee had a son. Maybe He could have a Son, tell me" This man in his wisdom began with the Creation. Almost all our Indian beliefs tell that the God of the sky, God over all, the one God, came down to earth and took from the earth and made man and that's why we call the earth, Mother Earth. That's why the Indians do not believe in cutting the forest, because they said, "Who has the right to cut our mothers hair?" This man told about God taking from the earth and making man, and the chief said, "Ah, I know." Then he moved quickly on into the flood, and how that God had made man, had watched man do so much badness, decided to get rid of them, brought the flood, but said He would never do it again after saving the one. And the old chief said, "Ah, I know." Almost all the Indian religions have a story of the flood. Then the man went on through and came to God looking once more and seeing that man was living bad, had done so many things wrong. God in His heart must have said, "How can I talk to them?" Then he said, "I know I will send my Son. He will talk to them and show them the things I want them to know." His Son came as a baby, and grew, and lived among the people and then told them what God wanted them to know. But some people did not like to hear what He said, and so they took Him and killed Him and they put Him in a cave. And they put a stone over the front of the cave, which was the same way these people buried. But He had said He would not stay there. They could kill Him but He would not stay dead. He would prove the resurrection, because He would come back to life, and in three days He did so! And He said whoever believed in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. The old chief looked at the man and said, "I believe, I believe Saghalee Tyee, who made the land, who made the mountains, who made the streams, and all the beauty that is in this world, I believe that Saghalee Tyee could have a Son but who is He? Tell me his name so that I will know who His son is." This man, looking at the chief, knew that when anyone said the name of Jesus, they were thrown off the reservation. This was the test. As he looked at the chief, he said, "His name is Jesus."

At that moment, tears began to run down the cheeks of the old chief, and he said, “No one ever told me that Jesus was the Son of Saghalee Tyee, and I have kept the Son of Saghalee Tyee from my people. Why didn’t anyone ever tell me that Jesus was the son of Saghalee Tyee?” That man went on to be one of our great Indian preachers, unable to read, yet a tremendous prayer warrior among our Indian people on the Northwest coast of Washington State.