



**A Pastoral Letter by Black Elk in *Šinasapa Wocekinē Taeyanpaha***  
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Letter written on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation at Manderson, South Dakota, January 6, 1914, published in *Šinasapa Wocekinē Taeyanpaha* on the Fort Totten Indian Reservation at St. Michael's Mission, Fort Totten, North Dakota, Vol. 18, no. 7 (February 15, 1914): Verso of supplement without pagination.

This letter refers to the Titanic, the Olympic-class passenger liner that became infamous for her collision with an iceberg and dramatic sinking nearly two years prior on April 14, 1912. Black Elk was familiar with trans-Atlantic travel by steamship from his trips to/ from Europe in 1886 and 1889 (ages 23 and 26).

Translated from Lakota to English by Paul Manhart, S.J., 2002.

Announcer.

We have a very fine church indeed: First of all we had a big Thanks, so that is what I shall say, this way: Our church is very large and tall, inside a very large yellow lamp shines, and each day a bell is rung. Yes, my Relatives, it is where you go to and come from home. It is right to examine this house. Though it be dark, it is alright to see with this lamp. And though it be disagreeably hot, it is proper for you to listen for the bell. Since the Catholic Church alone is very large within, there our Lord's Word resides. There is light, this bell, or the priest that show up, so it is appropriate for us to go there and listen to them.

Yes, my Relatives, you know about things of this sort, have seen them, heard of them. You have been instructed in South Dakota as Catholics to strive a bit for this world's honors. And God's honor you do not see much because this is something we will already know.

Men of the United States constructed a very large and fast boat. We made many millions of dollars, so that in a few nights one crossed the ocean. So, great rich men were alone able to do such, and poor men were able to get rich. It was because of great honors that they travelled. They said never would the boat sink.

Yes, those rich men believed it. They did not know what they would come up against. So, one day they struck against something, so that the boat they made sank from blindness, a difficulty that came over them, and their fright was great. There were meantime two priests who were there. Many men in heaven would stop them. And a small boat was there and a tiny one. Yet they were blind and were stopped. Something went on to say this: My God is near to me.

I am near to you. He is near to me. At your cross I now stand. My song is near to me. When that was said they went in. Yes, my Relatives, take a look. There was an accident due to a great honor. The trouble with the world's honor is that the trouble is up above. In worldly honor we twitch. You pay your debts up above when you are up against something. You do not see when you are struck by something large. You wander about, a ghost that will wander about and sinks. There is a grave sin here. Then you will say: "Lord, Lord!" You will say: "That is very troublesome, my Relatives." Desire to be close to our Savior. Desire to stay in our ship. So the Savior says: "For poor men and sinful men I have come." So he speaks to them. In your heart the Savior is born for you. He is such that he has great strength. So he said you will be given something truly the truth. And when God helps you, he wants it to amount to something. Desire to see. That is what should be. So, my Relatives, all about, this is what I announce. Give close attention to it.

My friends, all by grace, I am your friend and shake your hand.

Nick Black Elk Catechist

e we wacin onpelo. He ablezapiye  
 i kolapi. Wicabo eya wankatuya  
 n yuha onskanpi na ontancanpi  
 kin e okini sni kin heon tanyan  
 n sni yelo, Kolapi, he yuhuku un-  
 a yuzapi kin omniciye kin iyuya  
 l okihi tka yelo. He he esa wan-  
 a katuya unyanpi ca hececa yelo.  
 Okolakiciye kin el ebonwanpiye.  
 Mitakuyepi, lonanni wakansica  
 kokam onwe sa slolonyapi sni.  
 Heceel on tuwa wocekiye el on  
 kta ne konangan rtaunkayapelo,  
 e ne waste sni yelo: tokane tuwa  
 a wowicaha el on necin ne yusinya  
 onpi waste yelo. Ho nea able-  
 zapiye, lena el wiyuxcaupi ota.  
 e Wocekiye nitawapi el unyeksu-  
 yapi wacin.

ALFRED BONESHIRE.

MANDERSON, S. D.

Jan. 6, 1914.

Eyanpaha.

Tipiwakan wanji iyotan  
 waste rca unyunapi: ne tokaneya  
 wopila tanka unyunapi, neon le-  
 cel epin kta. Tipiwakan unkita-  
 wapi he lila tanka na lila wan-  
 katuya na imahel petijanjan  
 zi wanji lila tanka iyoyanpi na  
 anpetu iyonila riarla wanji ka-  
 riapi. Ho hecel mitakuyepi, to-  
 kiya yaipi na yakuoi canna tipi  
 kin he ayatonwanpi kta iyececa,  
 nakun oiyokpaze esas petijanjan-  
 ye kin he ayatowanpi kta iyece-  
 ca, nakun kate oiyokisice esas  
 riarla kin he anayagoptanpi kta  
 iyececa. Incin Sinasapa Woce-  
 kiye he isnala lila tanka, imahel  
 Itancan unkitawapi he Oiye yan-  
 ka na iyoyanpa kin he e na rla-  
 rla kin he ins wicasawakan he  
 epi hecel tokiyatan ho taninpi  
 kin etkiya unyanpi iyececa na  
 anawicagoptanpi kta iyececa.

Ho mitakuyepi, lena lececu ca  
 slolyayapi na wanlakapi na na-  
 yaronpi na onspeniciyapi hecece  
 esas South Dakota imahel Sina-  
 sapa yaonpi kin maka wowitan  
 kin hecela akitapi na Wakan-  
 tanka towitan kin eyatowanpi  
 sni neon taku wan unstolyapi  
 kte kin he lee. United States  
 wicaha kin wata wanji tanka wa-  
 ste kagapi na nakun lila luza, he  
 lila mazaska woyawa tanka ota  
 on kagapi, neon hanbepi conala  
 miniwanca opta oamani hecel wi-  
 caha wijca tanka kin hena ecela  
 el yankapi okini na wicaha wa-  
 rpanica kin hena tuweni el yan-  
 ka okihi sni, hecel he wowitan  
 tanka on omanipi; he wata kin  
 tohanni mini in kte sni keyapi.  
 Ho hecel wicaha wijca kin hena

oyasin wicalapi. Taku kuseya  
 on kin he slolyapi sni kin heon  
 tka wanna anpetu wan el taku  
 kuseya on kin akipapi, hecel wa-  
 ta qon he caga wan iboto na wo-  
 gongge hecel wanna woterike on  
 iyaklepi, na lila woniniciye tan-  
 ka. Econnan wicasawakan nonp  
 el unpi na wicaha onge marpiya  
 el niwicakiyapi na ins econnan  
 watla eya ciksisitla el mahel on  
 na henu inseye wica onge niwi-  
 cakiya wanna mabetaku iyayapi  
 qel lecel eyapi: "Mita-Wakan-  
 na, micahda on, Nikiyela waon;  
 Micahda on. Nita cansusbeca  
 kin er inawajin, Mita-dowan kin  
 he micahda on." Heyapi kin  
 econnan mahel iyayapi. Ho mi-  
 takuyepi, he wanyakapo. le wo-  
 witan tanka on lecel wakipapi.  
 Le woterike kin maka wowitan  
 kin he iwankab oterike na hecel  
 maka wowitan qel nakapi na  
 wankatuya yaklajujupi taku ku-  
 seya on kin wanlakapi sni tohanl  
 ne ayakipapi kinhan taku tanka  
 yaknunnipi kte kin he lee wica-  
 nagi wan yaknunnipi kte na taku  
 ibonitopi kin he wowartani tanka  
 kin hee yelo: kin hehanl lehapi  
 kte: Itancan, Itancan enapi kte  
 na he lila terike mitakuyepi, he-  
 cel Wanikiya unkitawapi ikiyela  
 on wacimpo, he wata unkitawapi  
 ekta yanke wacin po. Heceel Wa-  
 nikiya lecel eya ce: "Wicaha wa-  
 rpanica na wicaha wartanipi on  
 wahi ce." Heceel owicakiyake,  
 hecel nicantepe kin el Wanikiya  
 nicitonpi he wowasake tanka  
 yuha heccena taku nicopi kta  
 keye kin he awecakohan wowica-  
 ke na Wakantanka oniciyapi kin  
 he taku kta necin wanyank wa-  
 cin po. He taku kta hecin hecel  
 mitakuyepi owancaya yaonpi kin  
 le eyawapaha kin le tanyan  
 ablezapo.

Mitakolapi, oyasin wowaste on  
 nape ciyuzahi. Nitakolapi

NICK BLACKELK.

Catechist.

NEWS FROM CHEYENNE R.  
 RESERVATION.

7 churches here have Cate-  
 chists: 2 haven't any.

Henry Grouse Running is the  
 Catechist of St. Joseph's Cherry  
 Creek. Frank Acts-the-bear, of  
 Leo's, also Cherry Creek district.  
 Alex LeBeau, of St. John the  
 Evangelist, near Promise.

Joseph Handboy, of St. Paul's  
 White Horse.

Sam Shot-at, of St. Luke's,  
 Thunder Butte.