



Native Sons



Equipping Native Leaders to Reach Native Americans

PASTOR MARVIN B. BEGAY

POINTS OF INTEREST

- If you would like to contribute to Pastor Marvin's work with Native Youth & Children please send donations to: The Native American Fellowship, Attn.: Cheri Sampson. PO Box 83387; Phoenix, AZ 85071. Be sure to mark any offerings "Native Youth Department".
- From June 19th—July 13th Pastor John & Johnson and the Bay Shore AG are housing me. From July 14th—August 17th. Pastor Dave Pilch and The Syracuse Teen Challenge are housing me. My deepest thanks to both!

PRAYER POINTS

- New financial partners.
- AIC as it transitions with Southwestern Assembly of God University.
- Safe travel while I itinerate.

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"Short term missionary teams are good, but they come and go. Some baby the people. Don't give me fish—teach me to fish. Don't give me animal meat—teach me to hunt." Pastor Marvin Begay has a passion to disciple Native people for Jesus. He does not bring many missionary teams to his church, because his vision is to raise up and promote Native leaders. "We can get the job done; we know how to promote hope and faith in the Lord."

Pastor Marvin is well known and highly respected in Native circles and by all who know him. He gave his life to Jesus when he was 15, one to two years after his mother and sister came to Christ. His aunts encouraged him to keep following the Lord and his church used a discipleship program designed to disciple Africans that truly grounded him in God's Word. A year or two after he gave his heart to Jesus, he was baptized in the Holy Spirit under his uncle's evangelistic ministry. His home church was made up of mostly women and young babies — "Mostly my cousins. I did not see a lot of young men serving the Lord." At a service in Carson, NM he saw a group of 5

AIC students who impressed him with how they taught God's Word and handled themselves, as a result he went to the College Days at AIC in October 1988. "I was blown away when I saw 120-150 Native Ameri-



Pastor Marvin B. & Delia Begay

can men and women worshipping God." A year later he was at a Native Convocation where Pastor Dobie Weasel (another well known and highly respected Native leader) challenged the youth to give one year of their lives to the Lord by attending a Bible College. Young Marvin committed to this challenge. Although he had considered other Bible colleges he was so impressed by his experience with AIC and its students that he chose it. "I intended to give only a

year, but once there I was nurtured, challenged, and built up. I lacked self-esteem coming, but I learned a lot. I was even the student body president for two years. AIC did a lot for me and I want to do all I can to promote it."

Pastor Marvin and I share a favorite teacher, Dr. Anthony Palma. I sat under Dr. Palma's ministry at Valley Forge, but he came to AIC for a few years after he left Valley Forge. Pastor Marvin had a number of favorite teachers, included among them was Dr. Palma. "He was the toughest teacher I ever had. He really challenged us. I wanted to take Greek with him, but he left before I could."

Pastor Marvin is a man up to a challenge. He earned an AA in Business and a BA in Ministerial Studies at AIC. When he graduated from AIC he felt he had book and leadership knowledge, but "I needed more. Pastoring a Native church is very different. I felt if I was going to make an impact I needed to work with someone." Pastor Roger Cree (an extremely well know & respected Mohawk elder) mentored him for 5-years in

ON A PERSONAL NOTE

I am now in Long Island, NY beginning the first leg of this summer's itineration. Before coming here I spent about a week in NC with our Lumbee family and friends. In mid-July I will shuffle off to Syracuse, NY to itinerate throughout NY state. Before leaving to itinerate Theresa and I enjoyed a week of vacation in Palm Desert, CA with friends. It was nice to have some down time, do some sightseeing, and just generally relax and spend time together after this busy school year.

Theresa is at home alone now. We talk daily, but this is not the same as being together. She sees Levi, Alicia, and our grandsons regularly and Levi swings by to help out with lawn care and items that I would normally take care of. She is teaching both summer sessions at her school; keeping busy should help

some with my being away for so long.

Levi is getting quite a few orders for his "live edge" furniture work now. He is enjoying working with wood (like father like son!) and creating these furniture items lets him control his own schedule in a way that no other job would allow. He is thinking about taking a semester or two off from Fuller. He has been enjoying the biblical study courses, but not so much so the spiritual formation classes. Alicia continues to enjoy working maternity, but still has a crazy schedule (typical for nurses). We continue to enjoy seeing our grandsons and watching them grow. Dillon is now 5 and Torrin 3.

Caleb and Natasha have finished their

internship trainings and continue to work as EMTs. They plan to move to GA sometime this fall.

Thanks for your prayers and support!



Washington. "This helped me a lot. The things he taught me are still in me. He put me on a schedule and I still pray daily from 6-7 am."

After 5-years Pastor Marvin returned to Phoenix and earned a post-baccalaureate degree in Elementary Education. He then taught 5th grade for a year in Buckeye, AZ. During this time he and his wife attended 5 different churches. "They did ministry 5 different ways and I learned different ways of doing things—some good, some not." Everything he learned he integrated into his life and ministry picking the pieces that he thought were best and that fitted him and his ministry needs. "I use PowerPoint" and provide sermon notes when I preach. I try to be Pentecostal in my preaching, in worship, and in the altar call. I believe in the altar." The altar is the opportunity to respond to God's Word after it is proclaimed, and this is something that I also stress in many of the classes I teach.

After Phoenix, Pastor Marvin took the pastorate at Canyon Day AG on the White Mountain Apache Rez. The church is 74-75 years old and was pastored by white missionaries for 62 years. Pastor Marvin has just completed his 12th year of ministry there and it is now the largest Native church in AZ. He thinks it may be the largest Native AG church in the southwest. Pastor Marvin is Navajo and although there are similarities between the Navajo and Apache,

there are also cultural differences that he has needed to adapt to. He says, "I try to be careful on what I say knowing this is not my tribe. I also teach that God loves the world, so we must be careful about a one-tribe mentality. I try to broaden the vision. We can get stuck and selfish if we think about 'just us'. I avoid using the 'tribal card' and focus instead on Christ. However, as a Native American I can say things that other ethnicities could not say." He compares cross-cultural ministry to purchasing a goldfish at Walmart and putting it into a new tank with other fish, "it must acclimate or it will go into shock and die. It's important to be sensitive to culture. Like Paul, I become all things to all men that I might win some (1Cor. 9:22). Some things won't change and we need to accept this. Other things can change, but this takes time."

Pastor Marvin appreciates the work of (primarily) white missionaries among Native people, but notes that one thing that is not done well in US Missions in the AG is that there is no cultural schooling nor are missionaries to Native people required to learn the language of the culture they are going to. He notes that many at Canyon Day AG do not speak Apache, because for 62 years white missionaries who did not know the language led the church. He also has concerns about missionaries "babying and not teaching the people. When this happens Native churches cannot become self-supporting, self-governing, and

self-propagating". These are legitimate critiques and concerns that I share with him. These concerns are also a foundational part of Pastor Marvin's life and ministry.

Pastor Marvin has a vision for the next generation. He is the Youth Director for the Native American Fellowship and has pioneered an annual Youth Convention and Youth Camp. His next major project is to start a Native Kids Camp. Many youth get saved, called into ministry, and baptized in the Spirit at these events. Every summer he takes student interns from AIC and provides structured and intentional ministerial training for our students. When I asked him about his rationale in what he does, he stated, "Monkey see, monkey do. Lots of AIC students come from small rural churches (and are prone to copy what they see in these for good and for ill). Canyon Day is a big church with a good size congregation. It gives the students an opportunity to see what can be done and provides a challenge to imitate what they see. We set a good example. We help and teach and hopefully in time they will want to go out and do what we do."

Amen!

I do not know Pastor Marvin well, but I do know a kindred spirit when I hear one.

Native Youth Convention & Youth Camp

"In the 1990's I learned that 90% of all who give their lives to Jesus do so before they graduate from high school." Pastor Marvin B. Begay is passionate about reaching the next generation for the Lord in a way that few others are. It's not that the adults are not important, but he understands that it is easier to win and disciple someone when they are young. The older we get the more baggage we have and the harder it is to teach us. He says, "It is important to win people early and to give the younger generation a chance and hope."

Besides pastoring at Canyon Day AG Pastor Marvin is the Youth Director in the Native American Fellowship (NAF), a position he has held for 13 years. He led the youth in his home church and was involved in youth ministry while at AIC since '91-'92.

After becoming the Youth Director for NAF he visit-



Native Youth Camp—2015

ed the Southwest Latin Youth Convention. There he noticed a poster for a Latin Youth Convention run by Latino leaders. God put it in his heart to do something similar with the Native Youth. He developed a plan and schedule, met with a number of Native leaders, and was given permission by the then AIC president to run the convention at AIC.

The Native Youth convention just held its 11th meeting this year. Many of our students have given their lives to Christ and been called into ministry during this convention. Seven years ago God began talking to Pastor Marvin about starting a Native Youth Camp. He began this camp because the district camp was becoming too expensive and because he wanted to use and promote young Native leaders. He knows that people learn by what they see, "if they see us doing it, they will think, 'if they can do it, I can do

it." He says, "To have all these tribes coming together is a really beautiful thing. We discuss topics they have to deal with." He compares outsiders coming in and teaching to someone going to Africa, but teaching western concepts. This does not work well, a careful reading of Scripture shows the need to proclaim God's Word in ways that address the needs of the culture.

Pastor Marvin also wants to start a Native Children's Camp, but at this point the funding is lacking. Yet he says, "We know God is in it and if it's God's will, then it's God's bill." Although Pastor



Revs. Marvin B. Begay, Dobie Weasel, John Maracle, & Jackie Holgate at 2016 Native Youth Convention

Marvin keeps the cost of a 5-day camp and the Youth Convention low, he also stresses that it's important that the youth and their families pay something so that they will appreciate what they get.



Native Youth Convention—2016