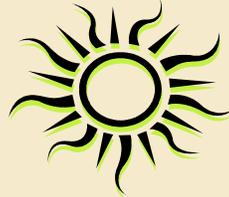




# Native



# Sons



## Equipping Native Leaders to Reach Native Americans

### PASTOR MARTY PAXSON

#### POINTS OF INTEREST

- Native Sons April 2013 shares Marty's story while a student at AIC.
- Before being called into ministry Pastor Marty was a Tribal police officer who eventually became a Tribal detective. He also served for a number of years working for the Tribal Fish and Game department.
- Whiteriver AG is his home church at the time he was called into ministry.
- Although the White Mountain Apache reservation is beautiful, there is also much need among the people.

#### PRAYER POINTS

- New financial partners.
- Wisdom to minister effectively.
- The spiritual and educational growth of our students.

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"Before I thought that pastors have it made, I was not prepared for all that a pastor goes through and how much faith in God is needed." Pastor Marty, a 2015 AIC graduate, became an associate pastor at the Whiteriver AG on the White Mountain Apache Rez prior to his graduation. Last year he was appointed the senior pastor with 99% of the church voting for him. Like all of us, he discovered that there is a great deal more to ministry than meets the eye and that challenges arise from many fronts.

Pastor Marty initially served under a missionary pastor as a part-time associate. He worked full-time as a substance abuse counselor on the Rez and was known for being a good worker and good with the clients. When the pastor left for another position and Marty was voted in as pastor he continued working outside the church for a year, but was stretched thin and found his church ministry intruding on his substance abuse counseling work. "I was not at peace working outside the church and kept hearing God say, 'You need to trust Me.'" When he offered his resignation the counseling center wanted him to stay and offered him a supervisor's position. At the end of his two-weeks they threw a party for him, gave him gifts, and generally loved on him so that he really wanted to stay. Even so, when he began devoting himself

full-time to the church he found that he grew to a new level in his relationship with Jesus, deepened in his relationship with his daughters, and that the church became healthier and grew numerically.



**Pastor Marty**

When Pastor Marty first became senior pastor the church was running 100-120 people including children and youth. Today it is running around 300. They needed to take out a wall in the sanctuary in order to accommodate the growth and are currently talking about building. I asked why he thought the church had grown so much. He believes that the people wanted their own Apache pastor and noted that many backsliders and those who had left the church have returned. He also notes that he has led many to the Lord since his

return to the Rez from AIC, including a man who he used to party with. "An Indian Rez is a new world, separate from the US. You can live on a Rez and not be a part of the community and not experience what people go through. An outsider can witness, but people are likely to say, 'You do not know what I have been through.' Even though a white person can claim the same experiences, he will not be responded to in the same way. I grew up in this area, so no one can say I do not understand. I drank, did drugs, was violent, and had many women. My wife left me when I began to prepare for ministry, so I know what divorce is. Because of what he has done an Apache man might ask, 'Why would God want me?' I can answer that question and be heard." Pastor Marty also believes that all the historical atrocities committed against Native people (boarding schools, theft of land & culture, the ethnic genocides, etc.) are still on the minds of the people. There is also on-going fear of whites taking what little land is left to Native people. He also notes, "People look at us as savages." There was a recent fire on the Rez in Cedar Creek. Pastor Marty was looking at it on Facebook and saw comments blaming all the Apache for it. He

### ON A PERSONAL NOTE

It's officially summer here in Phoenix and though I get to poke fun at the northeast winters while enjoying temps in the 70s, the flip side of the poke is the Phoenix summers with temps at night nearly as high as the day (too much concrete and asphalt to cool down) - but hey, it's a "dry heat!"

Theresa and I took a week of vacation in late May in Ramona, CA. We were able to attend a professional rodeo, visit the Salton Sea (which is a SERIOUS mess), spend a day at the San Diego Safari Park Zoo, and go on two whale watches (we were given \$7 tickets for the 2nd!). I also visited the Barona Band of Missions Indians Reservation and museum. It was nice to get some down time together and get away from our usual routines. Theresa was recently promoted to lead teacher & the Director of Curriculum at her school.

This came with a pay raise and additional responsibility. She likes the work and is pleased with the promotion. She continues to teach in the classroom full-time as well and does most of her additional work at home in the evenings.

Levi and Alicia are doing well. She had been carrying my niece Tara and her husband Zach's baby (they are unable to have a child on their own) and gave birth to baby Decklyn at the end of May. Tara came down about a week ahead of time and spent time with Alicia, Zach arrived in time to be present for the birth. They hung around for a few days afterwards and then drove back to WA. Not only is this Zach and Tara's miracle, but it is my brother Mick's first grandchild.

Caleb and Natasha are well. They continue to serve as fire station paramedics and work towards certification as firemen. Caleb has switched form body-building to power lifting.

As always, thanks for all your prayers and support!





**Preaching**

will be judged.”

For a long time Pastor Marty had wanted to be a pastor, to spend more time with his girls, to help on the Rez, and to help with the alcohol and abuse problems on the Rez. He says, “it’s all come to pass.” He opened the church up to the counseling center where he had worked and they are now holding AA meetings at the church. He has led three of his old partying buddies to the Lord, one of whom he met again panhandling at the post office. “I talked with him and bought him a soda. I talked with him every time I saw him after that. He is big and looks tough, but he is now serving the Lord and is at church. He really has a kind heart.”

Pastor Marty also ran this year’s Fort Apache Indian Camp meeting—this is for adults, youth, and children. “It was a challenge financially, especially with me being young and divorced, but God moved every night and moved when I preached.” Some committed their lives to Christ for the first time, others who were ready to give up were refreshed, and there were baptisms in the Spirit almost every night.

said, “When I was a police officer a lot of bad crimes were done by non-tribal members. I encouraged people not to judge, because we also

When I asked what he liked best about ministry Pastor Marty said, “Seeing people want more of God. That God uses me to so others see Him. If He can change me He can change others. God’s changing our church and the people in it. I love what God is doing and how He is doing it.”

When I asked what is most challenging he said, “Getting people to step up and help take care of the church. When I came the missionary did everything and arranged for missionary teams to come in and do things.” This is a real problem with missionaries and short term missions both in Native America and around the world. Care must be exercised. It is not helpful to do for others what they can and should do for themselves. A hand-up is a good thing, handouts are not.

I asked what at AIC had helped prepare him best for ministry. He indicated that AIC had prepared him for counseling. He also indicated that learning the history and cultures of the people of the Bible and learning to read Scripture in context has made a big difference for him. “I use the Bible almost all the time now, I have to. I think from it, live by it, preach from it. I learned how to properly study the Bible and I’ve learned that I need to read other books as well.” I had to smile hearing this because I was one of Marty’s toughest teachers and worked hard to drive home the importance of properly understanding God’s Word. “AIC prepared me spiritually by teaching me to read the Word, not just as a text, but as life saving. You have to be in the Word every day for yourself.”

When I asked where we needed to improve at AIC in preparing someone for ministry Pastor Marty indicat-

ed that he thought we should push internships more. He did two internships with us. The first was a failure because the mentoring pastor was not invested in mentoring him. Fortunately, another pastor, Rudy Martinez from Texas, took him under his wing and shared with him the difficult things in ministry that he had experienced and concerned himself with helping Marty to grow into the leader that God intended. Mentorship is important and this goes far beyond the classroom into our real lives and the messy process of spiritual growth.

Pastor Marty’s final words to those preparing for ministry or thinking about ministry... “Be ready spiritually. Be prayed up. Know God’s Word. Be ready in season and out of season. Be willing to learn—Bible college is just for a short season—get everything you can out of it, but know that there is lot more to learn once you are in the ministry.” I am proud of Pastor Marty and proud to be one of those who helped to prepare him to serve the Lord and His people.



**Pastor Marty’s Installation**

## The Apache

primarily a brutal people as the early Spaniards claimed. Instead, though they were fierce desert dwellers, they lived peacefully with many surrounding tribes and engaged in various forms of trade. They were especially known for their gentleness among their own families and with children.

By the 1700s they dominated the SW plains and challenged the Spaniards and Pueblo for domination of the area. They made a place for themselves during a difficult time when other tribes were in decline. They were willing to adapt to the changing needs of their environment and incorporate aspects of other cultures they came in contact with. Because the Apache became dominant, many weaker tribes adopted their language and ways and as a result were strengthened. One writer called this process “Apacheanization.”

The term Apache is thought to come from a Zuni word meaning “enemy.” The Apache called themselves “Inde” or “Nide” which mean “the people.” They lived, like many other First Nations peoples, in extended family groups and joined together during times of war to fight common enemies. They lived by a strict code of conduct based on family life and loyalty. The Apache’s generally good relationship with the Pueblos changed with the arrival of the Spanish and their capture of Native people for slave trade.

The six surviving Apache groups include the Western Apache, the Chiricahua, the Mescalero, the Jicarillo, the Lipan, and the Plains Apache. These groups live in TX, OK, NM, and AZ. The Western Apache (AZ) include the Northern and Southern Tonto, the Cibecue, the White Mountain, and the San Carlos groups. Arizona Apache tribal land is divided into the White Mountain and the San Carlos reservations. The White Mountain Apache attribute in part their ability to remain on their original tribal land to the Apache scouts recruited by General Crook in the Apache Wars. Today tribal enrollments is about 15,000. Whiteriver, where Marty ministers is their seat of power & the Rez includes some of the richest wildlife habitat in AZ.



The Apache are believed to have originally migrated from the Alaskan region, Canada, and the US Southwest. Originally nomadic hunters and gatherers they are credited as

being the first tribe to ride and use horses. By 1700 many had migrated to the Kansas plains, but they were eventually driven out by the Comanche. They moved to NM, AZ, TX, OK, and Mexico.

In the 1730’s they began fighting with the Spaniards. The long and bloody war ended when in 1743 the Spanish agreed to designate part of TX for the Apache and in 1749 an Apache chief symbolically buried a hatchet to show that the fighting was over—an image still used today to indicate the end of hostilities.

The Apache were fierce guerilla warfare fighters. As hunter gatherers, they would raid other tribal villages if they were in need. Apache prowess was legendary and it was said that an Apache warrior could run 50 miles without stopping, and could travel faster than a troop of mounted soldiers. Geronimo is one of the best known and fiercest of the Apache warriors. Though their name struck fear in the hearts of many historically, they were not