



Native Sons

Equipping Native Leaders to Reach Native Americans

TINA PONCHO

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- The Coushatta originally came from the Georgia-Alabama territory, but migrated to Louisiana because of Anglo encroachment and pressure.
- The Coushatta of Louisiana were formally recognized by the federal government in 1973.
- The Coushatta Tribe is comprised of app. 865 members
- The Coushatta reservation is a small territory of app. 5,000 acres.

PRAYER POINTS

- Sale of our home
- New financial partners
- Safety and strength for Levi, Caleb, Alicia, & Dillon.

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"I hate to speak in public, but I enjoy preaching His Word when He is preaching it." Tina Poncho is an introvert, a senior at AIC, and a student leader. She is among the most respected students on campus., but came to AIC "kicking and screaming" and often wonders how God can possibly use her since she is a Native woman.

Tina comes from the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana. She was raised in a traditional Native American culture. Life was not necessarily easy for Tina growing up, but she notes the Coushatta are an intelligent and proud people who have stood up for themselves. so conditions are much better now.

Tina was in her 20s, had a daughter and a live-in boyfriend when she first accepted Jesus. She was not interested in church or Jesus, but her nephew invited her to come to church and she did not want to disappoint him. An evangelist spoke and as the time for the altar call came Tina says, "I got comfortable in my chair"; she intended to resist. The preacher gave the altar call and she felt something tugging at her. He gave the call a 2nd time; the feeling was stronger, but her resistance stronger still. At the 3rd invitation she leaned forward, but remained seated. The evangelist continued, then stopped and said, "I don't understand

this, but there is still someone. This is your last opportunity, please stand." Something broke inside of Tina and she stood. The evangelist then literally climbed pews and pushed people aside to reach her. He began prophesying over her. Tina says, "Something broke when he laid hands on me.. This stoic, mean, hard female broke



Tina Poncho

crying, 'How do you know this; there is no way you could know this about me.'

For a season her boyfriend came to church with her and gave his heart to the Lord, but then he fell away. Tina herself was sliding back into her old life, but felt miserable and hungry spiritually when her boy-

friend left her. In the midst of this devastation she returned to church and the Bible. One day, still reeling from hurt and frustration, she fell to her knees crying out, "I will go where You want me to go, say what You want me to say, do what You want me to do." God then asked three times, "Are you willing?" Wondering why the repeated question, she answered "yes" each time. With her third answer her sadness started to fade and God told her, "Stand. Clean your house., Get ready." She fulfilled these commands literally only later realizing that God was talking about spiritual preparation.

Tina was told of AIC, but resisted going "to the desert." She completed 3 years of ministry training in Texas, but God continued to prompt her to attend AIC. "I came kicking, screaming, ." Today, she misses home, but says, "God knew what He was doing when He brought me here." She has ministered in Hawaii, Mexico, and Puerto Rico as part of her time here at AIC. She has a strong desire to complete a master's degree and even a doctorate. In Hawaii Se said to herself, "This is my dream realized", but God said, "No, this is your dream just beginning." God uses the humble and willing.

ON A PERSONAL NOTE

Theresa and I are now in AZ. We had a buyer for our home at the end of July, but 2 days into our drive the purchaser backed out. The house is back on the market; please pray that it sells soon. Obviously, God wanted us to remain together, but the situation is difficult.

The school year at AIC is going well, but I am extremely busy working most nights until 9 pm and then working Saturday too. Theresa's position did not work out as expected and she has been picking up substitute-teaching work. She has also begun night classes at AIC so she can eventually teach in the public schools. She too is working most nights until 9-9:30 and Satur-

days as well.

We are settling into a Native church in the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community which is about a half hour from our apartment. Rev. Cheri Sampson is the pastor. She is also the first Native female presbyter in the Assemblies of God.

Levi has been re-deployed for another 8 months and is on his way to the Iranian Gulf area again. Alicia is pregnant with their 2nd child which will be born around the

time Levi's deployment is over. Congratulations guys!

Caleb's deployment has been backed up until November. He is still expects to be sent to Japan, but we will see what happens with him in light of world events.



AIC—Lee Academic Center