



# Native Sons



## Equipping Native Leaders to Reach Native Americans

**BREANNA (BREA) POSEY**

**POINTS OF INTEREST:**

- The Navajo Code-talkers saved countless thousands of lives in WWII communicating. The complexity of the Navajo language made their communications undecipherable to those who did not speak Navajo.
- A Hogan is an 8-sided traditional Navajo home designed to be in harmony with the world. A proper Hogan's door always faces east.
- In August of this year the Colorado River, which runs through Navajo territory, was polluted by a US gold mine flooding poisonous toxins into it. The EPA provided clean drinking water for towns affected, but some Navajo towns made the news because the EPA gave them polluted water.

When Brea's pastor began encouraging her to go to American Indian College shortly after she gave her heart to Jesus she was unsure. She had grown up in an alcoholic family where depression hovers darkly. She has experienced the loss and near loss of loved ones to suicide. She had struggled academically in high school and dropped out of College of America in Phoenix where she had studied for a while to become a medical assistant. For 4-5 years after high school she had been involved in drinking and going to clubs. She was young in the Lord and further college was not exactly on her horizon.

When she moved back to Tuba City from Phoenix her aunt drove her. Her aunt was a traditional Navajo, involved in Native spirituality and not a follower of Jesus. Brea was surprised to see a Bible on the dashboard of her aunt's car and asked if she was going to church. Her aunt answered, "Yes, at Tuba City AG", but they discussed this no further. A month after returning home Brea's aunt asked her if she would come to church — they were having a 3-day revival service. That night the preacher spoke on the things going on in the country and

talked about God's love. The message caused Brea to want to change, she wanted something different than she had known. She went to the front at the altar call to receive Jesus. That night she gave her heart to the Lord and has not gone back to her old life since.



**Breanna Posey**

Brea's pastor gave her an application for AIC and then helped her to fill it out. She worried about her ability to do well in her

classes here. In truth, she has often struggled to understand her homework and text books, but she has done her best and many of her teachers have worked one on one with her and through e-mail. She says "I've grown steadily spiritually and academically each year. Last year my study habits really changed. I became more focused and now I really have a better understanding of what I am learning."

Brea has been highly involved in outreach ministry and student leadership since her arrival here. She served as the freshman class president, the sophomore secretary, and the junior representative on AIC's Student Body (ASB) leadership. When she did her first ministry outreach as a freshman she was impressed by the student leaders and their concern to prepare their teams for ministry. Over her time here she has often been the ministry leader. She says, "Doing outreaches makes me want to be a really good leader. I want to do what God wants for His people." AIC's student outreaches often include pulpit ministry, leading worship, doing

**PRAYER POINTS**

- New financial partners.
- Theresa's health
- Increased enrollment and finances for AIC.

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**O N A P E R S O N A L N O T E**

My summer itineration went well. Special thanks to Pastor Dominick Scibetta and Center Moriches AG for housing me at the end of May and through June and to Pastor Dave Pilch and the Syracuse Teen Challenge for housing and feeding me in July. I thoroughly enjoyed visiting the pastors and everyone in the churches, but 2½ months was a long time to be away from my wife and family. After returning home I underwent prostate surgery for BPH. The surgery and recovery went well and I began classes on time in late August.

Theresa is teaching the 4-5 year old class this year, which is her favorite age group. The school asked her to become the curriculum resource coordinator this year and appointed her a co-assistant administrator to handle things when the administrator is not available. She is thoroughly enjoying her ministry and

highly loved and appreciated by her co-workers, students, and the parents. In fact, parents fight to get her as their child's teacher.

Levi, Alicia, and their sons moved to AZ in May when I began my itineration and stayed in our home over the summer with Theresa. It made the summer much better for her. They have just purchased and moved into a home 15 minutes away. Alicia found her ideal job working in a maternity ward. Levi has been accepted at Fuller and is probably going to begin this semester. He is also waiting tables and running a number of chess clubs (for pay).

Caleb and Natasha are doing well. They are both EMTs working for the

same company. They have also begun school together this semester working on paramedic training. They are doing well in their studies, but Caleb is finding these studies much more challenging than the previous.

As always, thanks for your prayers and support!

**I don't have to worry about getting kidnapped. They would bring me back in less than an hour.**



**Comedy Club 24/7**  
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children's ministry, working with teens and doing youth camps, and doing parade outreach including handing out water and fliers. Brea says, "Doing outreach helps me to connect my studies and the Bible stories to experience. I look at how Moses led and understand better what is involved in how he ministered as a leader."

Doing outreach ministry has allowed Brea to connect to different people and their needs. Sometimes she is able to draw from her own experiences, praying with and counseling others. Other times she discovers that the needs are beyond her experience and understanding, such as one occasion when a teen girl opened up to her about her drug abuse and verbal abuse within her family. "I didn't know how to encourage her."

Initially, Brea wanted to work with youth and was not interested in children's ministry—she thought this would be boring. She has ministered to children repeatedly during the outreaches and discovered not only a real joy in doing children's ministry, but a real need. She states, "Working with Native children is important because of the neglect and

need issues on the reservations. Some parents neglect their kids because of drinking and going out with friends. Often fathers are not present for their children, sometimes mothers aren't even present and have relatives take care of their kids. Having a father is very important for a family. Not having parents present hurts kids emotionally." After graduation this year Brea would like to return home to Tuba City (AZ), help the pastor any way she can, and minister to the children.

Brea grew up in Tuba City, AZ. Like all cities, there are better areas and worse areas, but she says it has changed a lot since she was young. The issues of alcoholism, drug abuse, gangs, and suicide, especially teen suicide are growing. I asked her why she thought this was so. She responded, "When you see people walking on the Rez they are often downcast. If a person is drunk they won't accept you. There are many deaths from alcoholism, there were 2-3 in one month this summer. I think teens commit suicide because they can't find love at home, then they look elsewhere and if it does not work out then they don't see the use in living anymore. It hurts that no one

loves them."

Regarding what she has learned at AIC she says, "The big thing I learned was the importance of being ready for anything! It is important to be in the Word and in prayer all the time! I feel like I know a lot more about God and God's Word. I have grown in my relationship with Jesus—I pray and read more than before, this is so important. I am better prepared to minister."

I asked her why someone should come to AIC. She said, "Come here if God lays it on your heart. Come to get equipped and to encounter God in chapel, in classes, and in ministry outreach."

It has been a pleasure to watch Brea grow spiritually and academically. I am considered a tough teacher here, so I know her struggles firsthand, but it has been pure joy to watch as she grasped God's Word better. Some things can be taught, other things must be caught. Brea has done both.

## A Brief Navajo History

The Anasazi peoples came before the Navajo. The Monument Valley area evidences remains of their civilization dating back to app. 1300 AD. But centuries before Columbus, the Navajo lived in the Four Corners area of America. Spaniards made first contact with the Navajo in 1581. They used an adaptation of a Tewa Pueblo word calling the people "Apaches de Nabajo" ("Apaches who farm in the valley"). The Navajo do not particularly like this name and instead call themselves the Dine', which means "The People" or "The Holy People".

Conflicts with the Mexicans and Spanish eventually caused the Dine' to move from their original area to what is now the Four Corners area of the US. Initially, relations between Anglo settlers and the Dine' were peaceful, but when the respected Dine' leader Narbona was murdered in 1849 relationships



**Manuelito**

began to deteriorate. By 1850 the US government has established Fort Defiance near Widow Rock, AZ and Fort Wingate in northeast New Mexico in response to growing tensions. The Bonneville treaty of 1858 reduced Dine' territory and around the same time the relatively pro-Dine' army leader retired causing further tensions. More and more settlers arrived causing further conflict over land and lifestyle leading the Dine' and Mescalero Apache to fight and resist the settlers as they sought to keep control of their land and way of life.



**Barboncito**

caused by the brackish water of the Pecos River. Disease ran rampant on the Rez. Armyworm destroyed the corn crop and wood fuel rapidly dwindled. Children were forced into boarding schools in an attempt to "Christianize", "civilize", and "Americanize" the Dine'. Most of the Mescalero escaped this land prison on November 1865. After another three years the US government finally realized that the attempt to "Americanize" the Dine' was a failure.

In spite of another treaty signing in 1861 relationships continued to deteriorate. A dispute over a questionable horse race led to the massacre of 30 Dine' by order of Col. Manuel Chaves of Fort Wingate. At that time Gen. James H. Carleton began planning to relocate the Dine' from their homelands in AZ, NM, CO, and UT to a 40 square mile reservation at Fort Sumter in eastern NM. Using a scorched earth policy Kit Carson starved the Dine' into submission. In 1864, after a final battle at Canyon de Chelly the Dine' surrendered to Carson who then marched app. 8500 men, women, and children about 300 miles on foot in the winter to the small reservation at Bosque Redondo already occupied by Mescalero Apache. This march is known by the Dine' as "The Long Walk" and is the Dine' version of the Trail of Tears. About 200 Dine' died of starvation and exposure on the way, countless more died on the reservation from intestinal disease

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**The Long Walk**

In 1868 the US government signed a historic treaty acknowledging Dine' sovereignty and allowing them to return to their homeland. The survivors returned home in rags and hungry to a territory much smaller than they had left. The govern-



ment provided rations and sheep. Within a few years the livestock multiplied and the people began to prosper again. Today, the Navajo Nation is the largest First Nations community in the US and is the size of the combined states of Southern New England.



**Kit Carson**

**Dine' at Bosque Redondo Rez**