



Native Sons

Equipping Native Leaders; Empowering Native Christians

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1997, an orange cat names Stubbs became honorary mayor of the Alaskan town of Talkeetna. With a population of 772 in 2000, it would not have taken too many votes to earn the position (and the small town did not actually have a real, human mayor, anyway), but Stubbs proved adept at the role, gaining fans from around the world and "serving" in the position for years, greeting tourists and becoming a beloved symbol of the town until his death in 2017.

MAYOR STUBBS



PRAYER POINTS

- Levi, Alicia, and the boys.
- Guidance developing the CNLDS.
- For God to raise up Native pastors and missionaries to Native people.

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PASTOR RUDY MARTINEZ

Rudy's pastor told him, "You are Mexican. You need to go south of the border." Rudy had just returned from a weeklong mission trip in Casa Grande, AZ, among the Toham O'odham (pronounced "Toe-hoe-no Ah-thum") tribe. While there, he heard God say, "I have called you to these people." Despite his pastor's discouragement, Rudy has persisted in his desire to minister to Native people.

After finishing Bible college, an anticipated ministry door closed. Rudy returned home to the Waco, TX, area. He worked for 11 years as a prison guard while looking for ministry. Rudy constantly prayed about his calling. He tried to transfer to a prison near the Alabama Coushatta tribe, but this did not work out. He says, "Esther and I had some differences at this time. At one point, she asked me, 'What do you want to do?' I told her, 'I want to be a pastor to Native Americans.'" Esther told him, "Do that then."

Shortly after, Rudy received a call from an Alabama Coushatta church that needed a pastor. He ministered at the church and was voted in as pastor in 2000. Rudy remained at the church for 5-years. While there, he felt called to start a Native ministry school, but the church did not want it. As a result, Rudy spoke with Pastor Davis at Dallas Indian Revival Center in Texas. She told him that he could come and start

a school. Rudy struggled with the decision to leave the Alabama Coushatta but eventually moved to Dallas. Additionally, there were only 15 people at the church and severe financial issues when he arrived.

A missionary helped Rudy to connect with



Pastor Rudy & Esther Martinez

Global University. Rudy indicates that Global created a special curriculum for Native people for them. They launched the ministry school, and it grew quickly. However, most of the students were not Native. As a result, the district took over the non-Native portion of the school. However, Rudy and the missionary continued to work with Native students. Although Rudy had difficulty recruiting teachers, he notes that some students who graduated from his ministry school remain in ministry today.

Rudy pastored Dallas Indian Revival Center for 12 years, but during his last 4 years felt God calling him away. A Mescalero Apache church opened, but circumstances prevented Rudy from candidating for it. Six months later, a Jicarilla (pronounced "Hick-ah-ree-ah") Apache church opened in Dulce, NM. The missionary contacted Rudy about candidating at this church. However, Rudy had decided that he was going to retire and just do outreach projects. He turned the missionary down, but the man was persistent. Finally, the third time the missionary called Rudy became angry and told him, "There is a 0.1% chance that I will go to this church." Esther also refused to go to Dulce.

Later, Esther had a dream about sitting on the porch of a home and being able to see a church. Neither she nor Rudy thought anything of the dream, but what she had seen was the Jicarilla Apache church. Later, Rudy did a mini-revival in Dulce. The ministry went well, and the people asked him to become their pastor. He said, "No." However, Esther told him, "God has opened this door. We need to go."

A year after taking the Dulce church, the pastors in the Native section asked him to become their presbyter. He reluctant-

ON A PERSONAL NOTE

We have just crossed into June, and I am at the beginning of a busy 2 months of travel. I just attended the Intercultural Ministries conference in MO and a Native Camp meeting in Hungry Horse, MT. In a few days, Theresa and I will head to NH for a week of vacation with our grandsons. Afterward, Theresa will fly home. However, I have a month of itineration planned in NY.

Theresa is well. She is teaching her school's summer camps, and she is working with children ranging from 4-8 years of age. Her mom, Shirley, should have returned to VT already but fell and broke her kneecap two weeks before she was scheduled to fly out. She

spent a month in rehab before coming back home. She will fly out on June 16, one day before we begin our trek to NH.

Levi, Alicia, Dillon, and Torrin are all well. Levi is now working out of home 4 days per week, so he travels less and has more time for the boys. Alicia continues to enjoy nursing and is doing well. We are looking forward to seeing them all again shortly.

Caleb and Erin are well. Both have recently received raises, and Caleb recently received a promotion at the fire department. They are beginning to get more orders and sales of the knives they are

forging and other objects they make.

Anyway, as always, thanks for all your prayers and support!

ONE DAY YOUTUBE, TWITTER AND FACEBOOK WILL JOIN TOGETHER AND BE CALLED...



ly agreed and has been their presbyter for 3 years. The church had grown to about 70 people before COVID hit. Unfortunately, COVID has made ministry on the reservations exceptionally difficult. Even though many restrictions have been lifted, the church is only running about 45 people now.

Pastor Rudy is not Native and is not a missionary. However, he is highly respected among the groups where he has ministered. He is also greatly valued by the NM Ministry Network because of his ministry. Rudy is passionate about Native ministry and about starting Native ministry schools. He notes that there are hardly any Native pastors. This is true; only about 40% of Native churches nationwide have a Native pastor. Most Native pastors are in their 50s and 60s and older. He notes that ministry to Native people has been done wrong. He says, "Rather than raising up Native ministers, the different denominations that came in tried to erase Native traditions (cultures). However, in foreign missions, we raised leaders among the local people. Because of forcing Christianity on Native people, many have become resistant."

Native people often speak about not wanting "the White man's religion." This refers to being told by white missionaries and ministers that they needed to give up everything in their culture, including their language, as part of living for Jesus. Rudy notes that to fix this problem, "We need to raise up Native pastors." He says, "The responsibility to win Native people to the Lord should be on Native people. Every tribe will have its own uphill battle. Rather than outsiders leading them, Native people should be leading themselves."

As a presbyter, Rudy asks the Native pastors, "Have you started training your replacement?" He notes that some feel threatened by this idea.

Additionally, aging pastors often have no retirement income, so they believe they have no choice but to continue to minister at their church to survive. As a result, many churches are comprised of older people and are not flourishing. He says, "We need younger pastors to bring new vision and energy. Good pastors do leadership training." Rudy is working on raising leaders in Dulce. However, it is an older congregation, and most don't want to become leaders. He notes, "We need to bring younger people in."

Pastor Rudy also notes that Native people on a reservation learn differently than those who live in mainstream America. He says, "Native people are very smart. They have learned to live where others can't. They have different ways of learning and different ways of thinking. To neglect this is not wise. We need to be very practical in how we teach Native people." This is very true. Oral cultures learn by doing and learn by repetition. Rudy highlights the need to teach Native people "on their level." What he means by this is that we need to teach Native people the way they learn. Mainstream American schools use a linear form of teaching. Native people use stories and indirect forms of teaching.

Rudy encourages engaging Native learning styles by using Native cultural items. For example, among the Apache, when someone dies, they need to be in the grave by noon. Also, all their possessions must be buried with them. He illustrates that when someone gives their life to Jesus, everything needs to be given to the Lord because the old has passed away, and everything becomes new in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). He says, "We need to find out who the people are and how they learn. We need to take our time. There is

nothing in Native ministry that is not going to take time.

Ministering among the Jicarilla Apache requires sitting with people and listening to them. Finding the things that connect the gospel and culture takes time. Rudy notes, "We have to put a lot of work and a lot of God's Word into it." He stresses the need to ground people in God's Word and to always back up what we are saying with Scripture. He notes that many outside preachers come into Native country, pick a topic, and run with it without ever citing God's Word.

Additionally, feelings run deep in Native country, and misunderstandings can happen quickly. Therefore, Rudy says, "We need to be really gentle and easy in how we communicate." In mainstream America, communication is often direct and confrontational. In Native country, it is often better to address problems indirectly to avoid embarrassing or shaming the other person.

Rudy told many stories of the spiritual warfare he has experienced in Native country, too many to relate here. However, he warns of the need to be ready for direct spiritual assault in Native country that is not often seen in mainstream USA.

There is a great need for trained ministers in Native country. Pastor Rudy notes that sometimes "rejects" from other cultures want to come and minister to Native people. He pleads, "Don't send us rejects. First, prove yourself, develop your skills, then come. Send us your best!" As we finished our conversation, Pastor Rudy said, "One last thing. These are beautiful people. They have not always been given the best, but they deserve the best. We can't undo what has been done, but we can't repeat what has been done either."



The Jicarilla Apache Nation is located in north-central NM on the Colorado border. The area is world-renown for its hunting, fishing, camping, boating,

and hiking. It is home to our nation's largest single elk enclosure comprising 14,500 acres. Black bears and mountain lions also roam freely in this area.

The small town of Dulce is the tribal capital, and as of 2010, about 3500 people were enrolled in the tribe, most of whom live in Dulce. Like Area 51 in Nevada, Archuleta Mesa in Dulce is famed as the alleged location of a 7-story underground government and alien base where strange experiments and ongoing occur.

"Apache" is a collective term for multiple Native groups with a common historical language. Historically, the Apachean people had no central government. Instead, they were composed of loosely affiliated clans. They roamed eastern AZ, Mexico, NM, and parts of TX. The Apache were fierce warriors and skilled military strategists. Early on, the Spaniards and Mexicans were their enemies. The Jicarilla were originally two separate bands.

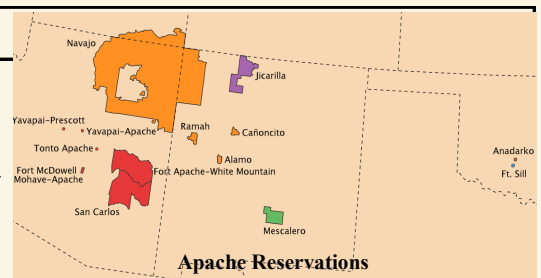
The Jicarilla Apache

The Llaneros, which means "the plains people," and the Olleros, which means "the mountain-valley people. Collectively, they called themselves Ndee, "The People." Jicarilla is a Spanish word that means "little basket-makers." The Llaneros lived in the eastern Sangre de Cristo mountains in adobe homes with farms nearby. They learned pottery and social and religious customs from the Navajo. The Olleros engaged in buffalo hunting and used Siouyan technology, including tipis, parfleches (purse-like beaded bags), and travois (triangular wooden frames used to drag things behind horses and dogs). They gave up Plains' life later than the Llaneros.

The Jicarilla were federally recognized in 1887 and allotted 416,000 acres for their reservation. The Dawes act sought to divide the land into individual allotments. Fortunately, the tribe succeeded in converting these allotments back into tribal ownership, thus avoiding the fracturing of the land and protecting their water rights. In 1906 the tribal territory was nearly doubled with additional land on its southern border. This land enabled year-round grazing and subsistence



Archuleta Mesa, Dulce, NM



farming. Today, oil and gas development are important economic engines on the Rez. However, a great deal of water is used, and the tribe is concerned about water quality degradation. In the 1960s, the Jicarilla fought for their permanent water rights to keep their homelands inhabitable and productive.

Water in all its forms is sacred to the Jicarilla. In the Jicarilla creation stories, "Born of Water" is an important deity who made the world a safe place for human habitation. He brought the four sacred rivers (the Arkansas, Rio Grande, Canadian, and Pecos Rivers) to the Jicarilla people. Water is a sacred element for the Jicarilla that requires respect, reverential treatment, and efficient use. Water is used symbolically in all Jicarilla spiritual ceremonies and rituals. The Jicarilla also consider their land sacred. The land shapes their culture, lifestyle, and identities. In Jicarilla's understanding, land and water hold the key to their past and define the people in the present.