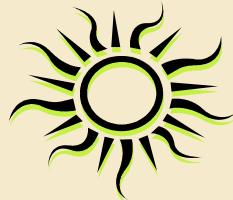




Native



Sons



Equipping Native Leaders; Empowering Native Christians

WEIRD FACTS

- The 1st coaster was used to transport coal downhill. When people discovered it could reach speeds up to 50 mph, tourists asked to ride on it for a few cents.
- In 2014, a missing woman on vacation in Iceland was found when it was discovered that she was in the search party looking for herself.
- You can't hum while you're pinching your nose.
- An ostrich's eye is bigger than its brain.
- The blob of toothpaste on your toothbrush has a name - it's called a nurdle.
- It is impossible for most people to lick their own elbows.
- In an average lifetime, people eat around 70 assorted insects while sleeping - and about 10 are spiders!

www.weareteachers.com/weird-fun-facts; www.thefactsite.com

HELEN'S PRAYER REQUESTS

- **Ranon**—Helen's 2 yr, old grandson who has asthma and is especially having difficulty breathing now during fire season.
- **Sarah**—Helen's sister who has seizures. She recently fell during a seizure and hit her head. She is currently in the hospital with blood on the brain & double vision.
- For more Children's Sunday School teachers at Cedar Creek AG and many of the Native churches.

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"I teach children's church. This is my life, and I love it! I hope to retire soon, but I'm not retiring from Christian ministry. I plan to keep teaching the children even when I need a cane, even when I'm in a wheelchair. There are fewer children now than there used to be in children's church, but children's ministry is my life!"

Helen Fall is one of the quieter students in the Native School of Ministry (NSM) on the White Mountain Apache Rez. She's all in for children's ministry if you couldn't tell. Interestingly, she is taking classes since she holds a three-year diploma in Christian Education, a bachelor's degree in Christian Education, and a 2-year associate degree in Business from American Indian Bible College (AIBC, now called Nelson-AIC). When I asked why she was taking the NSM classes, she said, "I wanted to learn more and get my credentials. I have a degree, but it does not mean I know everything."

Helen is not a White Mountain Apache. She is a Navajo who grew up in Shiprock, NM, on the Navajo Rez. She says, "My life was hard (growing up). My father worked for the railroad and was gone for months. He died when I was nine, and my mother went down after his death. She fell into alcoholism. I was sent to boarding school until 9th grade. Mom never came to any of the parent meet-

HELEN FALL

ings. I only went home 3-times a year for holidays and the summer. I did not like being at home."

"I have four sisters and three brothers and am a middle child. We kids raised ourselves. We all went to work early



Helen Fall

(while in high school). It was a hard life. I worked in the summers and bought my own clothes. My older sister was there for me, and my Grandma helped raise me, but I learned to defend and provide for myself. My oldest brother quit school in 9th grade and went to work."

"All through high school, I lived with a friend. I went home on the weekends to help care for my younger siblings, but I didn't want to be home. I didn't really like life. It was bad."

Helen was raised as a traditional Navajo (spiritually). She tried alcohol, but didn't like it and avoided drugs altogether. In her senior year in high school, a friend invited her to the Shiprock AG youth group, where she eventually gave her life to Jesus. The youth pastor, a graduate of AIBC, encouraged the youth to go to AIBC after high school. A friend of Helen's went to the school, and Helen went a year later after graduating from high school. She went for three years, then left for a semester. One of her brothers was experiencing kidney failure, and Helen was the only match they could find for him. She donated a kidney, and he lived another three years until his body rejected the kidney. Eventually, Helen's mom and one brother and sister gave their lives to Jesus, and her mom is still alive in Shiprock, NM, today.

She did not like life at home and returned to AIBC, now behind her classmates, and graduated in 1981 with a 3-year diploma in Christian Ed. At this time, the school did not offer a

ON A PERSONAL NOTE

Theresa and I are well. When you receive this newsletter, the students in the Native School of Ministry on the White Mountain Apache Rez will have completed 16 of the 18 courses needed for credentialing and should complete all by the end of the year. It is exciting to see them grow in their faith and understanding. One example of their growth came after a week of Camp Meeting services. The following Sunday, all the students came to class discussing which preachers preached biblically and which did not. Listening to them exercise a new level of discernment and concern to preach biblically was exciting!

Theresa has moved to part-time work at her school. Officially, she is the school's reading specialist, but practically, she has been a "gal-Friday" doing everything from office work to classroom organization to substitute teaching. She has also begun

receiving her early social security. Thanks for your prayers for her around the loss of her mom. She still has times when it hits her hard, so please keep her in your prayers.

Levi and the boys are well. Dillon, our oldest grandson has decided that he wants to enter the trades when he is grown. Torrin is now heavily into the Celtics and playing basketball and football. Levi has been dating but is taking things slowly. Please keep them all in prayer.

Caleb and Erin are well and remain busy. I am writing this newsletter early because I will be itinerating in Southern New England in September. I hope to visit them briefly while traveling to the Northeast. It will be

nice to see them again!

As always, thanks for your prayers & support!



Two of my former AIC students. They are very short. Self-Portraits?

4-year degree. She stayed at the school and earned a 2-year associate degree in Business, graduating in 1984. She did not want to return home to her Rez and stayed on at AIBC as a staff member. She worked publishing the school's yearbook and in the library. She also met her husband, Miller, but who goes by JR, while attending AIBC. An RV couple, Bro. & Sis. Clay came from Ohio came yearly with their family and helped Helen with the yearbook, helping with the layout and taking pictures. She notes, "They were really a blessing!"

In 1989, Helen left AIBC but stayed in Phoenix, not wanting to return to the Rez. She took a position as a teacher's aide at a Christian school run by Parkway Christian Church. JR began working at the Phoenix Indian Hospital. They attended All Tribes Assembly, founded by Pastor Alta Washburn, who also founded AIBC. During this time, their son and daughter were born. In 1998, they realized they did not want to raise their children in the city and moved to Whiteriver, AZ (the White Mountain Apache Rez). Helen did not want to return to Shiprock, so they moved to his Rez.

JR is Apache but was raised in a foster home off the Rez by a missionary couple. They went to the Navajo Rez and then moved to Cottonwood, AZ, where he attended the Montezuma Indian School, a Christian boarding school. Afterward, he attended AIBC. When his foster parents died, he moved to the White Mountain Apache Rez to learn about his culture. He never knew his father, brothers, or sisters. His parents were alcoholics and could not care for their children, though eventually, his father gave his life to Jesus. His siblings were also raised in foster homes. Helen's husband has never learned the Apache language but has been learning about his culture. Helen playfully calls him "an apple" - red on the outside, but white inside, because "he eats like a white

person. He wants veggies and meat instead of frybread and beans. He likes to use a knife and fork rather than eating with his fingers. It's OK to eat with your fingers."

In 1999, after moving to the White Mountain Apache Rez, Helen worked with the tribe's Child Find organization in Fort Apache. Child Find is an early intervention screening program for children up to five years of age. She has held numerous positions, including developing public awareness, has twice held the position of acting director, and is now "the Child Find Specialist," helping everyone else in the organization, including in the areas of public awareness, child referrals, radio announcements, and talking with various individuals and organizations about Child Find and its programs.

I am surprised that Helen wanted to take the NSM classes since she graduated from AIBC. But she says she and the others are learning a lot. "I like the way you teach. I am learning the 16 Fundamental Truths of the AG, and I did not learn these in Bible College. However, I learned theology, homiletics (speaking), about various cults, and many other things. I especially liked the book Christian Maturity (the first course) because it talked about God knowing our hearts. God's knowing us is important because sometimes it feels like He does not see us (but He does!). Previously, I did not feel fully committed to the Lord, but I am now. I am not saying I am perfect, but I am pressing in more now."

She also especially liked the Preaching and Teaching course. Previously, we completed a course on Understanding the Bible (how to dig into God's Word). I added material to both courses. Helpfully, the preaching course showed how to move from Bible study to sermon creation. She says, "We are learning a lot and are very thankful. Many things have been done wrong, but our eyes are opening. For example, we need to preach the Word. Some

preachers do not even open the Bible." A few months back, the churches on the Rez held a week of Camp Meeting services with different preachers each night. The following Sunday, all the students came to class discussing whether the ministers had proclaimed God's Word accurately—some had, but some had not. Helen especially likes the emphasis on preaching from an entire passage rather than just a verse or two or using scattered texts to create a message. She says, "We are developing a heart for souls—for winning and discipling others. We are learning and going in depth in a new way. Because of the studies we have been doing, we are now observing the preachers and know when they are not bringing the Word. We are learning good things about God and how to preach and teach. We are developing right hearts and minds towards others and Jesus."

What follows are Helen's unsolicited thanks which she expressed to me, but I want to share them because it is really thanks to each of you who pray for and partner with us. "First, I want to thank you for coming to the Rez. We never thought we would have someone come to teach us here, and it's affordable. I went to school, but others cannot, so we are very thankful to be taught here on the Rez. We never thought someone would come out and help us. It is a great opportunity for us to have you here. You have a heart for Native people and a heart to teach on the Rez. We are learning a lot. We appreciate that you take the time to travel and be with us. We can use what we are learning to teach our Native people." Though Helen was thanking me, my fruits are your fruits—so thanks for your prayers and support.

I have been encouraging the students to get credentials and then teach these classes next time around. Helen wants to do just this.

The Native American Church (NAC)

There was much that I could not include in sharing Helen's story. She mentioned that she gave her life to the Lord under the ministry of her youth pastor in Shiprock, NM. Unfortunately, he eventually fell away from the Lord. He has joined the Native American Church (NAC), which is also known as the Peyote religion. The NAC mixes traditional Native worship of spirits with Christianity and psychedelic drug use and so is far outside the bounds of biblical faith.

The NAC is a "pan-Indian" religion (mixing things from all Native cultures together) that originated in



NAC Tipi

Indigenous religious movement in the USA and Canada. It is practiced in more than 50 tribes.

The NAC combines elements of Native traditional worship with elements from Christianity. Different

groups combine Native traditionalism and Christianity in various ways and varying degrees. A NAC group will most commonly meet in a Tipi around a crescent-shaped earthen altar mound with a sacred fire. Services start on Saturday around 8 PM and include prayer, singing, sacramental peyote eating, water rites, and contemplation. Services ends Sunday morning with a communion meal. NAC members believe that eating peyote, which is a hallucinogenic, in this ritual context enables a person to commune with God and



NAC doctrines believe there is one supreme God (Great Spirit) who deals with people through various spirits, including the Native traditional waterbird and firebird spirits that carry prayers to God. In many tribes, peyote is personified as the Peyote Spirit. It is considered a God-given Indian version of Jesus (given to Whites). Some NAC tribal groups view Jesus as an Indian cultural hero who has returned, as an intercessor to God, or as a guardian spirit who turned to Indians after being killed by Whites.

Two main ceremonial peyote fireplace altars and approaches to worship have been passed down

generationally. The first is the Half-Moon Fireplace, named for the shape of the sand



NAC sacred horseshoe altar & fire

altar. Tobacco and corn shucks are used during the ceremonies (to call on spirits). There is little to no Bible reading. Different coal designs are created on the Tipi walls according to tribal traditions. A ritual staff is passed around the tipi during singing sections of the service. Mainly, non-Christian songs are sung, and 4 ceremonial songs are sung as part of the service. The second is called the Cross-Fire Fireplace. Its fireplace is horseshoe-shaped, and often, a second altar is created outside the tipi to represent the grave of Jesus. No tobacco is used. The staff is placed upright in the ground rather than being passed around. Portions of the Bible are recited according to a family's prayer for parts of the service. A cross design is created within the coals to represent some aspects of Christ. Christian peyote songs are primarily sung, including 4 main ceremonial songs as part of the Cross-Fire Fireplace.

Info from www.slife.org/native-american-church and www.britannica.com/topic/Native-American-Church