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Creek/Cherokee

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At the age of 6, I made a profession of faith at VBS but all through my growing up years I never felt secure with my relationship to Christ.

As a teen I began using drugs and alcohol, which progressively grew worse. Upon graduating high school I started college, the second year of school I married Paula. I really wanted to have a successful marriage, start a family, and just be happy but I continued to be my own worst enemy.

Towards the last of my second year of college a pastor's wife from a small Choctaw Indian Church made a visit to our home and shared John 3:16. I recall her reading the scripture and hearing her insert our names at the place where it stated 'for God so loved the world', to read, "for God so loved Gary and Paula Hawkins". This was the first time someone shared about God's unconditional love. I thought that God only loved "good people" and the one thing that I was certain of was that I wasn't good people!

A few months would pass and after much persuasion I attended a revival at Little Coweta and on the second night of the revival I felt God's Spirit speaking to me to receive Christ. At the age of 21, my entire life changed the moment I accepted Christ, I felt the weight of the world lifted and true happiness became reality for me and Paula.

My Pastor, Bro Ernest Best mentored me and taught me to share my faith early in my Christian life. I witnessed to those who would listen. Some seemed glad to hear how Christ had changed my life, many didn't want to hear about my new life in Christ or their need of salvation. Although at times I became discouraged I still shared, because I knew my friends needed Jesus just as badly as I did.

After 5 years I became a minister of the Gospel and served as a youth minister alongside my Pastor. A few years would pass until the Lord would call Pastor Best into full-time evangelism to Native Americans It was sad to see our Pastor step down. After Bro Ernest began his new ministry, God spoke to me about becoming the Pastor of Little Coweta. I felt very inadequate but I trusted that God would equip me for His calling. It was quite a learning curve, but I learned so much from God and the members of Little Coweta.

Then, after a few years the Lord spoke to me about becoming a home missionary to Native Americans. I tried to justify why I couldn't but the Lord continued to stir my heart and it became more and more apparent that the Lord's call was not going away. So I stepped down as pastor and moved my family 1700 miles to Browning, MT, Blackfeet Reservation, to restart a church that had been shut down for 5 years. I saw this as another giant step of faith.

Along with pastoring the Blackfeet Indians in NW Montana, the Central Plains Tribes of OK, and the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico, I have preached and taught God's Word in places among indigenous people that I would've never thought possible like Mexico, Canada, Honduras & Australia.

I served for 10 years as a Church Planting Missionary jointly employed by the North American Mission Board and the Baptist General Convention of OK and ministered among the 39 tribes in OK.

In Jan 2012, after much prayer I became the first Executive Director of FoNAC, a newly formed Fellowship of Native American Christians, which I presently serve. FoNAC is a faith-based ministry whose primary focus group is Native Americans and First Nations People of Canada.

The motivation for my life's journey has been Christ's love for me and His love for all mankind. All people need a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and I share the Gospel with whoever will listen. But my heart's primary focus is Native Americans.