

My Life Story - Arnold (July 2023)

My name is Arnold. I'm 64 years old, single, and Cree First Nation.

I was born in remote Saskatchewan and lived on the reserve in a mud and log house without running water, electricity, indoor washroom, and had no car. My Mom and Dad had 9 boys and 4 girls. 11 of my siblings died violent deaths or from alcohol addiction. My one surviving brother, age 66, lives in a care home in Regina.

I was an unhealthy child. I had 2 older sisters, 2 older brothers and a younger brother. When I was 4, my mother signed over custody of me for government care. I remember my heart pain, crying for days for my Mom. This was just the start of my suffering, a life without meaning, feeling confused, alone, lost, and unloved.

My first foster home was a white Catholic family who cared for me and forced me to go to Church. I felt isolated and alone, so I withdrew and became isolated and alone, both physically and mentally, living in my own little world, alone.

At age 5, I was judged "not a good fit", and was given to another white Catholic family for my foster care. Everything was the same. I was the same.

At age 6, I was taken to my first residential school. I was taught the white man's religion and ways of the Roman Catholic Church. I had heard about the Creator as a very young child. Now, I heard some talk about God, and was confused.

I was mentally, physically, and sexually assaulted and abused by nuns and priests. I was hurting and compelled to try to get home. Three times, I ran away, was caught, and returned, starting as an 8 year old hitchhiking on the TransCanada Highway.

At age 9, I was transferred to a very remote Catholic residential school. Everything was the same. The abuse continued. I was very alone, isolated, with no visitors, living there year round, with no hope of escape, and really, just no hope in life.

At age 16, the legal age of consent, I chose to leave residential school. Immediately, I searched for and found my birth family living in Regina, long-lost and long lost.

My Mom and Dad were alcoholics. I saw but didn't know them. I was still feeling alone, like a stranger, with no love or hugs. I was feeling not really welcome or belonging. Elders would sometime visit and talk about Native spirituality, that a spirit lives within all things. I was still searching for something unknown. I was restless.

My brothers and other relatives were into drinking and street-fighting with other gangs. I started drinking a bit and joined in their lives of crime and violence.

At age 17, I was sentenced to my first Correctional Institute for 90 days, and later for 6 months, and then 6 months again, living alone in a cell, just like my whole life.

Every time I was released, it was the same. I would use my family as home base, hitch-hike and wander for awhile, return for more drinking, crime, and prison again.

At age 26, I was a slave to alcohol, had no hope, and wanted to escape and start fresh. I went to Vancouver's Downtown East Side (DTES). I ate at souplines, worked cash day labour jobs, drank, and slept under bridges. This was my "life", every day.

At age 28, I was standing on a DTES street corner, planning to rob a corner store. A man came up to me, told me that he had prayed, and God directed him to me. He was the pastor of the Native church, just outside the DTES. His peace was attractive.

He told me the truth about the Jesus of the Bible. I knew that I was a sinner and that I needed saving, so I prayed to God and surrendered my life to Jesus as my Saviour and Lord. I really didn't know much but I knew my broken heart when I prayed.

It was very strange for me over the next few days, knowing that something had happened to me but not really knowing what.

I had a new desire to learn more about God, about Jesus. God, by His Spirit within me, prompted me to join a Bible Study and to seek the truth found in God's Word.

My confusion was being eliminated. My life was making more sense. My anger and bitterness were transformed into a new peace and calm. People told me that I looked different. I was different. I was no longer a slave of sin but now a child of God, born again by His Spirit, a follower of Jesus, a slave bought by His blood.

I was set free from desperately searching for God in religion or spiritual beliefs. Jesus is the truth, and "the truth will set you free". Jesus saved me and gave me a new life. I am His witness of Him transforming me into His new creation by His Spirit.

In God's Word, Jesus warns us that Satan is the father of all lies and deceptions, and is the "god of this age" of ever-increasing evil. Satan loves religions, the many different paths leading people to torment in hell forever. He wanted me to go to hell.

His truth has exposed the lies of the Roman Catholic Church religion, contrary to God's Word, promoting sins like saying Mary was sinless, calling priests, Father, and claiming that priests can forgive sins. Jesus hates religion and rebuked priests.

I am also free from the lies, deceptions, and temptations of Native Spirituality. God created the universe and all things in it by speaking them into existence. Only humans, did God breath His spirit of life into. Jesus is the only true Creator.

Now, I have a personal relationship with God. My prayers are personal, never memorized. I am protected and powered by His Spirit. I praise Him for being loving and forgiving, not mean and vengeful. I thank Him for all He has done. Sometimes, I break out in laughter while praying. I'm so blessed and so undeserving.

Jesus healed me of my alcohol addiction and allowed my eyesight and kidney to fail. He is a living God who faithfully walks with me through life. He is in control and He gives me His peace. I had 5 eye surgeries over 5 years, before my eyesight was restored. I did kidney dialysis 3 times a week, every week, for over 5 years, waiting for a kidney donation. I now have a new kidney. God is always good.

I love to be His witness, telling others of Jesus transforming me by His Spirit into His new creation. I also love to tell others the good news about following Jesus as Lord. And, I warn them of the bad news of rejecting Jesus. Why? Love, His love and mine.

You reading My Life Story right now is no fluke. It's part of God's perfect plan for you. And, if your heart or mind truly wants more today, just ask. Trust Him alone.

After I die, I want to see you again. Only One Way. Jesus. With God's Love, Arnold.