

NAIM News

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Returning to Our Roots

By C. L. Cowan

"MOST PEOPLE IN NORTH AMERICA IDENTIFY WITH CARS. My people identify with BOATS," says Tal James of the Penelakut Nation and Nisga'a ancestry. Tal is also a NAIM missionary and he was emphasizing the value of a boat ministry to reach coastal people.

NAIM is expanding its coastal ministry at the urging of missionaries, Native leaders and visionary supporters. The Board said, "Go!" just before our *NAIMNews* press time and already a team is preparing the *Solitude* for year round serv-

ice. It will link ministries from Prince Rupert, British Columbia, to near Seattle. It's a return to our roots.

NAIM started with a boat.

That boat, the *Willis Shank*, connected the vision for reaching coastal people to reality.

Tal James is one of those people. "Many of my family, friends and acquaintances still rely heavily on boats for travel. It is a starting point of developing relationship and to present God's

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Being a Part of What God is Doing Among Native People

love in a relevant way.” Tal’s people have used the water for centuries as a mode of transport, trade, “...and even courtship,” he adds with a grin.

Beyond tradition, boats are still vital. No ferries, scheduled flights or roads connect many communities along the central British Columbia coast.

Coastal people refer to individual boats by personal names, like friends or people they have met. Mention of the *Shank* (*Willis Shank*) elicits memories of people and events connected with that vessel, a part of local lore.

NAIM has a legacy of trust on the coast, built through the early years of coastal outreach. Everyone involved feels that NAIM should capitalize on that legacy before it fades entirely. “We want to draw on the best of the past while using the boat as a tool to strengthen the future,” says

Scott Markloff, head of the Coastal Ministries team.

Coastal connections extend strongly into cities such as Vancouver, Prince Rupert and Seattle through villagers who have moved there. “The coastal communities are in-

tertwined like a bowl of spaghetti,” says Scott. “You can’t pull on one strand of noodle without pulling on all of them.”

Scott’s team is building direct linkage between those who minister in the outlying villages with hospital chaplains and NAIM staff in the cities of the coast.

Brian Crumback, who will skipper the *Solitude*, lists 19 facets of ministry a boat could provide or enhance, from evangelism to greatly expanded youth and adult ministries. The goal is to operate within the traditional protocols each village has when a boat arrives, especially one bringing a Native guest speaker or ministry team. Brian plans to take people along in inten-

tional discipleship roles as the boat moves and ministers along the coast, aiding Native believers to mingle and strengthen one another. The boat will even provide a portable Bible



Brian Crumback, *Solitude*'s skipper

book store for isolated believers.

God has provided several essential factors, indicating the way forward. First is the team of expert mariners, including Brian Crumback, Don McLaren and of course Bill Lottis with his intimate knowledge of the coast, boats and deep personal friends among coastal people.

A deeply significant factor is a circle of visionary supporters. After visiting coastal villages over two summers with Bill and Sandy Lottis, a donor donated a 70 foot boat, the *Discovery III* for ministry to these villages. Regarding a boat ministry he wrote, “For those really serious about mission work and the lives of these Natives, this seems the only reasonable action to take. I cannot be too emphatic about this.”

NAIM leaders weighed this donor’s comments heavily, believing that God’s work in his life was a valued indicator of God’s heart for the coast. The *Discovery III* was translated into a vessel more fitted to the needs, the *Solitude*.

Brian Crumback is overseeing some needed additions to the *Solitude* for extended coastal work, including a better heating system for year round use in cold northern waters, a computer and upgraded navigation system, an outboard for the skiff, and an adequate cookstove.

Tal James sums up the value of a boat ministry. His people communicated by sea. That’s their traditional comfort zone.

“If Paul went to Rome and said, ‘Hear me, I’m Jewish,’ that would not work,” says Tal. “Rather he appealed to what tools he had and his Roman citizenship was that vessel. Coastal indigenous people would identify with a boat, an effective vessel for proclaiming the Gospel.” ■



The coastal village of Klemtu, B.C.

NAIM staff plan for coastal outreach.



Will and Cindy Kraske: Horses and Hope

by C. L. Cowan

OMAK, WASHINGTON. JUST THE NAME HAS a western punch to it. Will and Cindy Kraske* staff an outpost there on the frontier of God's Kingdom.

In 1991 Will asked for duty in a new place with no preceding ministry, and he got it. Omak, a name linked to rodeo and wild horses. His Field Director, Jack Teeter, told him Omak was a "dry, dusty little town with rattlesnakes and a river running through it." Will started that lonely ministry by walking the streets, praying and asking God what he was supposed to be doing. It is clear now that God showed him, as he and Cindy are a vibrant part of the local Native community.

God opened the first door through a Native believer in Canada who'd come to Christ through NAIM, whose daughter lived in Omak. That led to Bible studies and connection with the community. A second door opened as Will used his education in math and science to connect with schools, especially tutoring Native high school students in math.

A young man approached Will in the bank recently, a student he'd tutored ten years ago. He asked if Will still went to the high school and asked if he could drop in also. He's in college, taking a math course, and remembered how much Will had helped him to get this far.

God has taken that initial work with teens and formed it into the Kraske's major ministry and impact on the community. Will is one of three people who organize a community sponsored annual horseback trail ride for Native teens. A Native youth group has emerged that grows stronger year by year with regular life-impacting events that the teens recruit others to attend. The group hosts local teen nights and attends events like the Mt. Baker Snow Retreat sponsored by NAIM's Red Soul Rising, and the international Trail of Hope conference in Colorado Springs last summer.



Canoes built by Will and Native youth.

Lunch time is a favorite of Will's because Native teens often come over from the high school to his office in a nearby church. Rambunctious sounds announce their approach and continue as they tell him of the morning's school events. Will prays that this growing core of young Native men and women will impact their community as they step into adulthood.

Omak has been tough on adults in the past. A pastor introduced Will to a man in jail several years ago whom he worked with over many years. On his first visit, the man told Will that he could intellectually destroy Christianity. "Let's go!" exclaimed Will.

That started a friendship of years, of struggle, of the man coming to understand grace and embrace it. They lost touch after awhile, and the man lost a struggle that led to Will preaching his funeral.

We win some, we lose some, and some we won't know the score till we reach heaven. Will and Cindy are pouring their lives into men and women in Omak, especially the double bright hope of youth, who are learning to walk with Christ. ■



Will & Cindy Kraske

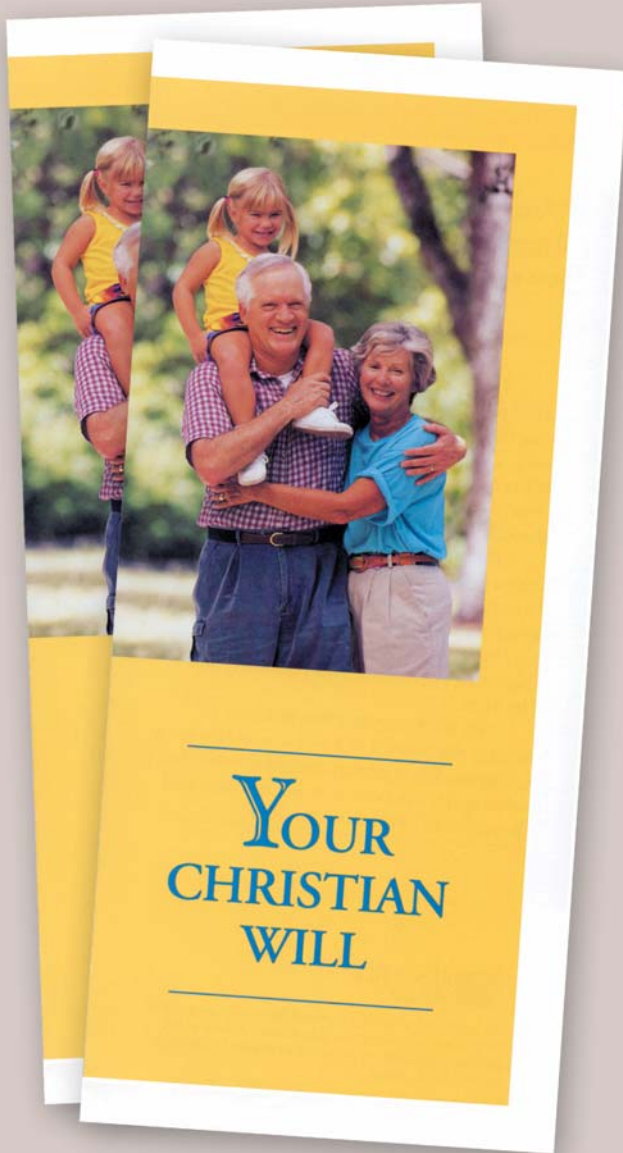
* Will and Cindy serve the Lord in Omak with their three children.

Your Christian Will

NAIM staff have a working commitment to God's Word and His work. And so do you, our prayer supporters and financial donors. Together, we seek to spread the great news of Jesus Christ to Native peoples.

Including NAIM in your will is a thoughtful way to support God's work of reaching Native people in the future. The brochure, *Your Christian Will* explains the importance of having a will, and how you can include NAIM in your will.

You can request your copy by calling our office at 604-946-1227. Or, e-mail our office at office@naim.ca.



From the Talking Circle

Bill Tarter, Executive Director

WHY ARE YOU NO LONGER coming to minister to us? We are concerned about our children and the paths they have chosen.

Native believers, who were touched by the ministry of the *Willis Shank*, have called to us from isolated coastal communities and asked that we return to continue the job we began over 50 years ago.



On July 24, 1949 the *Willis Shank* set out on its maiden voyage with Cap Stabbert at the helm, as Marine Medical Mission began its strategic ministry to First Nations people in isolated coastal villages from British Columbia up to Alaska. Sandy Lottis (née Stabbert) was a girl in pigtails carrying her full load as a deck hand on the *Willis Shank* and four years later Bill Lottis, a strapping young lad, signed on as the diesel mechanic for the boat's very faulty engines.

Over the years, after a name change to North America Indian Ministries (NAIM) and ministry expansion into western Canada, the boat ministry came to a close. And yet the coastal Native believers who came into Christ's Kingdom through the years of itinerant boat ministry continued to hope that NAIM would one day return.

Last summer I met with members of our newly formed Coastal Ministries team to study their vision for a renewed ministry to key anchor communities along the coasts of British Columbia and eastern Vancouver Island. We continued a process of dialogue that resulted in the development of a strategy to place resident term missionaries in these communities. The goal is to use our boat in support of these missionaries, and to integrate our current youth ministries, Summer Missions Institute (SMI), music and Native short-term mission opportunities in a renewed venture as we come alongside Native believers in the establishment of strong Christian communities supported by First Nations churches up and down the coast.

This is not a trip down memory lane. This is not about a boat. Given our considerable history and experience in coastal ministry, this about doing what NAIM is best positioned to do and no one else is doing. We are committed to continuing the task we began in 1949 because that is "...a part of what God is doing among Native people."

Freedom River Counselling Group

Last issue we profiled Terry Hall, Executive Director of the Native Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. This issue we want to focus on one of NEFC's ministries, Freedom River Counselling Group (FRCG).



Recognizing the need for quality Christian counselling from a First Nations perspective, NEFC started this ministry three years ago. FRCG offers seminars to First Nations in much of western Canada.

Focusing on the felt needs of the people, seminar topics include: *Dealing with Depression, Grief and Loss, Building Better Relationships, Parenting with Wisdom, and Residential School—From Survival to Recovery*. One of the most successful seminars is entitled, *Youth in Balance*, as FRCG has a youth-focused ministry.

Please pray for this ministry, that God would continue to use it to change the hearts and lives of First Nations people for His glory.

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- The NAIM office has a new staff member and, if you call the office, you may have the opportunity to speak with her. Robinah Matende joined us in March as Bill Tarter's Executive Assistant. Please pray that the Lord would use her in this new ministry assignment.
- The NAIM Leadership Council (see sidebar) recently took a trip to Albuquerque, New Mexico to visit our *Christ for Native Youth* division. The purpose of the trip was to meet with Native Christian leaders to advance NAIM's efforts in facilitating more Native leadership.
- Bill Tarter and former director Bill Lottis have begun holding gatherings for NAIM friends in different cities. The purpose is to personally introduce Bill Tarter to mission friends and give updates on the ministry. In January they held gatherings in Oregon. They are planning more meetings this year. To inquire about potential meetings in your area, please call the NAIM office.
- NAIM held its Annual General Meeting and Celebration in Bellevue, Washington on February 26, 2005.

NAIMNews Gathering Grounds

By Jim Hamilton, Gladstone Director

RECENTLY WE HAD A GLADSTONE REVIEW. It was an evaluation time, a time to correct, adjust and hone our focus and future. In just the few short years we've had the ranch it has been a marvelous expression of God's handiwork. We've had over 25 work teams join in the fixing up and development of the place. We've completed three major building projects and the new wash house should be ready for use this summer. Each summer has been full and we expect another one this year. As I reviewed all that we've seen take place it is undeniable that God has led us beyond our greatest expectation.

This review caused us to define our "strategic plan" in greater detail and tune up our focus. It was not an easy time, but turned out to be very valuable. Gladstone gives us a unique place to **support and intentionally integrate** the ministries of NAIM Staff and First Nations Fellowships, giving

greater impact than doing it alone.

We've already seen the power of people coming together—working, playing and sharing in each other's lives. An elder said after her time at the ranch, "I've never been to a place so peaceful, so full of love and contentment... everyone gives each other time each day. Everyone shared the work load... like harmony in the old way. It touched my heart so much I cried when I got back home." That captures my passion as we draw people together around Jesus. Gladstone is a great place for that!

Moving forward this year we need to purchase the option on the last section of property which encompasses the West end of the lake and provides for several sites in our overall strategic plan. Please pray with us about this and if you would like to have a part in the purchase designate your gift for the Gladstone Option. This must be completed before the end of November. Thanks! ■