

Serving With First Nations To Reach All Nations

To the Ends of the Earth



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By Tucker & Grace Grose

WHEN YOU THINK OF the ends of the earth, where does your mind go? Northernmost China? Outer Mongolia? Antarctica? Well, Kamchatka could probably rank up there in at least the top 20!

In 2003, my wife Grace and I went to the Kamchatka Peninsula in Far East Russia to learn about the indigenous tribe of the Even people who live in this remote region. The Even are subsistence fishermen as well as reindeer herders. Their villages and encampments are where most of us would consider the ends of the earth.

Fast forward six years, God began impressing upon us that we were to return. As we began making preparations, we learned that some American missionaries had moved to the exact village we had previously visited. We contacted them about working together and bringing First Nations believers with us. They warmly extended an invitation for us to come.

From July 30 to August 16 of this year, we were able to return to the Kamchatka Peninsula. Jesse Mills, a Cree First Nations believer from

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"Ends of the Earth" continued

Ontario, Canada, and Vova Burnashev, a Sakha native believer from Yakutia, Russia joined us to form a strong ministry team.

Jesse Mills is 19 years old and attends the Sudbury First Nations Church in Sudbury, Ontario. He is a gentle, quiet sort of guy. Though he's only been a believer for two years, Jesse eagerly participates in ministry at his church. Already he has been leading services and helping out with Sunday school classes.

The day before departing for Russia, Jesse's pastor had told him, "Jesse, if you get the chance to take a risk, go for it! If you have opportunities to share the gospel with someone, just go for it!" Little did Jesse know that by hopping on a Russian jet airliner and flying half way around the world, he would be taking many steps out of his comfort zone.

Yet each step took him deeper and deeper into God's plans for him.

When Jesse got to Kamchatka, he had the opportunity to share his faith with the local people right away. Part of the first week was spent around two villages, doing street evangelism, distributing Bibles to those who wanted one, and inviting the Even people to come to a cultural exchange Bible camp the following week.

Jesse jumped right in with sharing the gospel and his testimony. Though street witnessing was not something he was used to doing, he was able to effectively communicate through Russian translators. In the evenings around the campfire, the Even people would ask Jesse questions about his life, his Cree culture, and his faith. Jesse began to see how God was already working in the lives of the people he met, as well as in his own life. His pastor's encouragement was paying off.

Jesse is one of a growing number of First Nations and Native American believers who are fulfilling the Great Commission by being God's witnesses "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). ■

Tucker and Grace Grose serve with NAIM in their ministry called, *First Nations Mission Mobilization*. They seek to find ways to encourage First Nations and Native American believers to become involved in the Great Commission. They are "Serving with First Nations to Reach All Nations."



Top: Vova and Jess—not just fishers of men!
Centre: Tucker hanging out with some Even teenagers.



Bottom: Even dancers display their cultural traditions.

A New Beginning for the Inner City



Left: SAY YES! after school tutoring program helps elementary students have success in school, preparing them to go on to high school.

Below Left: The New Beginnings mission team reached out in Jesus' Name to the Blood Reserve in Southern Alberta.



greeted by a big, warm smile. It was NAIM missionary, Diane Grant, who along with her husband Byron has served in inner-city Vancouver for the past 30 years.

The number of First Nations in the city of Vancouver has more than doubled since they first moved here in 1979. Early on, it was clear that a multicultural approach to ministry was necessary, as many First Nations were connected to people of other ethnicities. For over 15 years, Tillicum Native Centre was a safe place for First Nations people to gather and find counselling, resources, and helps in their adjustment to urban life.

Then in 1990, a group of leaders wanted to start a church among the economically disadvantaged people of this city. Joe Russell, pastor of New Beginnings Baptist Church, asked Byron to assist the church in discipling the many new believers, which included a large number of First Nations families.

By Katie Pillsbury, and Byron & Diane Grant

“DID YOU HEAR ABOUT LAST WEEK’S celebration service at New Beginnings?” “Don Barlette spoke, and it was incredible.” “This inner-city neighborhood is being transformed!” I had to see for myself.

So one afternoon, sunny for this time of year, I ventured by bus over to the East side of Vancouver. This part of the city is full of juxtapositions; wealthy homeowners, elderly Italians, young hipsters, and low-income families. Its charm lies in its diversity of people.

In the midst of the inner-city, sits an old church in a beaten-down neighborhood, across from an unusually vacant park. I walked around to the back door, entered the kitchen, and was

Over the years, outreach has increased as the church has moved closer to the heart of the First Nations community in Vancouver. After seven years in the Salvation Army building, they needed to find a new space. So the search for an appropriate meeting place began in late 2008.

Ministry kept moving without delay. In Summer 2009, the Grants and a group from the church embarked on a mission trip to the Blood Reserve in southern Alberta. Several members of the Blood Reserve attend New Beginnings, and it was their desire to share Christ’s love with their own people. The group spent months preparing for this outreach! While there, many doors were opened for the Native believers to share their stories of how Jesus is transforming their lives. They handed out

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Meet NAIM's New Director



IN LATE OCTOBER, AT NAIM's Annual Staff Conference, the NAIM Board announced the appointment of Clyde Cowan to the permanent position of Executive Director. "We look forward to serving with Clyde in the furtherance of God's Kingdom." We want you to meet Clyde and his wife, Paula, who have willingly stepped into this new role.

NN: *Clyde, how long have you been with NAIM? What led you to this ministry?*

CC: Paula and I spent a summer with NAIM in 1975 and were full time by September 1976. Both of us felt called to missions. We kept heading that direction and God led us to NAIM.

NN: *You've had a variety of ministry roles. Tell us more about this.*

CC: The common thread is my passion that people really understand the Gospel. Whether someone accepts or rejects, I want them to deal with the real person of Christ, not some misunderstanding. That engine drives my speaking, writing, and training.

After five years in a multi-cultural pastorate, we spent 13 years on a Reserve. During a stint as NAIM's Communications Coordinator we created the Dan Red Eagle comic books. That led to forming COMIX35 which puts the Gospel into the world's most-read literature: comic books. I served with

Interdev for two years, and have taught courses on missions and writing in several countries.

Paula has served for several years with Women of the Harvest, strengthening missionary women around the globe.

NN: *How do you enjoy spending your free time?*

CC: Great pleasures are friends, good bakeries, hiking alpine after big game, and kayaking, especially when towed by a salmon. Ten grandchildren are the best free time of all.

NN: *What is your vision for NAIM and its future?*

CC: The increasing number and vitality of Native believers is changing the world of NAIM. Our focus remains on Christ and His commission to make disciples, baptize them and teach them to observe all that He commanded. The future will be ministering *with* Native believers, not only outreach *to* this special people. If they will have us, we look forward to more Native believers joining those in our ranks already, taking roles from board to village to ministry abroad.

NN: *How can we pray for you as you step into this new role?*

CC: Ask God to give me grace. I need it. My heart and experience is with people and ministry, yet this role calls for administrative ability. We need good and skillful people on this team to cover the gaps for each other. I am counting on the Grace of God or would never have accepted this role, presuming to lead 100 of the finest missionaries I know. ■

"A New Beginning" continued

Bibles to the community, and were encouraged in their witness for Christ!

While there, Pastor Joe called and asked what the people thought about purchasing the Pacific Grace Chinese Mennonite Brethren Church in East Vancouver. The believers began to pray earnestly and excitedly. Byron replied, "I've never seen the inside; I don't know if it will suit our ministry, but let's see what God will do."

Prayers went to the Father, and His answer came! Faith came alive as their bid was accepted, and God began to move in the hearts of His people to help with the purchase. The church is divinely located; within nine blocks there are a dozen apartment buildings housing First Nations people. The Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship center is just two blocks away, and directly across the street is a large city park. As of December 2009, New Beginnings had a new beginning with a place to call "HOME!"!

As Diane and I looked around, taking in the nooks and crannies of the church, she explained all the renovations that volunteers have been helping with over the past year. It was clear that God was providing: resources, personnel, and materials were all donated. Neighbors were coming by to express their gratitude, which allowed them opportunities to share of God's wondrous provision.

It was time for supper, and I was invited to join. As I shared the meal with 20+ others, it became clear that the neighborhood's diversity was flowing into the church; this was an outreach to the nations. Later on, the men, women, and youth divided into groups for times of Bible study. I sat back and listened to First Nations women share openly about how God is bringing freedom into their lives, physically, relationally, and spiritually. It was powerful; a true illustration of the Church.

As ministries continue to impact this community, God's Word is going forward in power to reach inner-city Vancouver for Christ. ■



Many Nations, One Savior

By Rick & Ruth Guenther



OVER A YEAR AGO, NAIM staff Rick and Ruth Guenther were asked by their local church to consider joining a multi-ethnic church plant team in Saskatoon,

Saskatchewan. This area is heavily populated by ethnic groups, immigrants and refugees from at least 27 different countries as well as many First Nations people. The Guenthers have felt for some time that fellowships in urban centers need to reflect the multi-cultural neighborhoods in which they are located, so the offer was met with great enthusiasm! The church leaders met with NAIM leadership and an exciting partnership was formed, one which will hopefully enable the team to carry out NAIM's mission of "Serving with First Nations to Reach all Nations."

Recently a First Nations woman attended our community Bible study. While there, she commented, "My boyfriend and I were talking last week and we think Jesus was the last man who lived in the lost city of Atlantis!" We have always said that one of the things we like about working with people is that we're usually never bored. We're finding this to be

truer than ever now that we're working in a multi-cultural setting!

After a light lunch, we divided into groups to discuss who we thought Jesus was, and then Rick shared what the Word says about Jesus. We were very encouraged that 20 people from the community came to the study; five countries and three Reserves were represented!

The highlight for us came at the end of the study when a man from Burma stood up and announced that he was going to teach everyone a song. He proceeded to pull out a guitar and very enthusiastically began teaching us all a simple praise song. Just before our new friend started to sing, he gave a simple testimony of how his mother in Burma had prayed to Jesus for him everyday, and how because of Jesus, he had life!

Everyone joined in to sing his song. As he directed us, he walked past each table, stopping and cocking his head to one side, listening to see if the group was singing loudly enough, and motioning us to sing louder! It was an exciting foretaste of hearing Jesus praised with many foreign accents. We look forward to the day when the room is filled to capacity with people of many nations praising our Lord Jesus! ■





NAIMNews

NAIMNews is published semi-annually by North America Indigenous Ministries

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Printed in Canada

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NAIM is on Facebook®

We want to let you know about something exciting: **NAIM is now on Facebook®**. Yup, that's right—we've taken the plunge into social networking, and there's no turning back. This will enable us to better connect with you, and inform you of what's going on at NAIM.

We hope to keep the page updated and interactive with photos, videos, events, prayer requests, links, etc. so that the word spreads. However, **we need your help to do this!** Please visit the NAIM page on Facebook®,



Find us on Facebook

and click "Like." Then you can share the page with your friends and family who may be interested too. We need your help to spread the word of what the Lord is doing among the Indigenous peoples of North America!

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What are you doing next summer?

Summer Ministry Initiative (SMI) 2011 is gearing up for next summer; looking forward to serving in various communities in urban and rural Saskatchewan, Canada. Your ministry will be to build relationships and to share with others your personal experience with Christ. We believe that relational ministry is key, and that God has given each person unique gifts to serve Him. Get ready for a life-changing summer!

Dates for the 7-week option are June 27 to August 12, 2011. The shorter, 3-week option dates are June 27 to July 19, 2011. For more information, go to www.naim.ca/fnp or email us at smi@naim.ca. Applications are up on our site; come join us!

NAIM STAFF CONFERENCE 2010

FROM OCTOBER 25–28, NAIM staff travelled to Canmore, Alberta for NAIM's Annual Staff Conference. Located in Bow Valley, the town of Canmore is surrounded by the majestic Rocky Mountains, which provided a beautiful setting for our missionaries to relax, reflect, share laughs, and spend time together. Our Island team did a great job planning for these three days; there was a perfect balance of free time and group sessions. We are tremendously grateful to our guest

speaker, Duane Elmer, Professor of International Studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Illinois. He led us on an exploration of our values and personalities, and how this translates cross-culturally into ministry. Staff were able to share honestly about what is and what is not working on the field, and how we can support each other. Overall, we came away strengthened by the Holy Spirit, encouraged by our teammates, and refreshed for another year. God is good! ■

