

Serving With First Nations To Reach All Nations

## Anchoring *for the* Soul



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NAIM on Facebook®!

By Tom and June Cox

“TOM, WE WOULD LIKE TO HIRE YOU to work for us.”

“I’m sorry, I can’t. I work full time for another agency.” Tom and June Cox had been working with NAIM for several years in Seattle. To increase contacts, Tom had started volunteering as a GED (General Equivalency Diploma) instructor at the Seattle Indian Center. After continued requests from the center to hire Tom, with the Lord’s leading and NAIM’s approval, the Coxes stepped into this new role. Tom’s job there was

the most productive thing he and June had entered in terms of providing openings for ministry in people’s lives.

Based on that success, Tom hoped for a similar position when he and June moved to Lummi. They prayed for God’s will. Within a week of arriving, and volunteering at a Native college, Tom was hired to tutor in the GED program. A couple months later June was asked to teach volleyball.

Several NAIM staff serve in First Nations communities through their full or part-time employment there. NAIM refers to these missionaries as *community anchors*. They live as followers



of Jesus and develop relationships within the community, hoping that through their living witness others will choose to become Jesus followers too. From the community's perspective, the anchor is just another job holder who happens to be a Christian.

As a general rule, Lummi people are wary of outsiders, especially Caucasian Christians. This is true in most Native American communities. It stems from traumatic practices historically done in the name of God. Having Christianity "forced down their throats" has left a bitter taste, even generations later.

Jobs at the college provided an avenue for the Coxes to serve. They meet felt needs, lessening the mistrust that many missionaries face going into a community. Roles as educators allowed Tom and June to walk beside people as peers, instead of as missionaries or pastors who are often perceived as being on a different level. When asked what they were doing on the Reservation, Tom and June would visibly see people relax when told they worked at the college.

Over the years, the Coxes have attended community events, including most funerals, because they care. They have become familiar faces. They openly acknowledge their position in the community as guests and learners. Their intent to be respectful, and to be

culturally appropriate has helped establish relationships. Relationships of trust are key in Native communities.

When appropriate, Tom and June have shared their belief in Jesus, prayed, and invited people to Bible studies. People seek them out on campus for spiritual advice and prayer. Over time these requests have also come from throughout the community. Tom has also been asked to do baptisms, funerals, and weddings. He has preached many times for a pastor at a new church at Lummi. Last summer Tom was hired to assist at Lummi funerals by

the funeral home which handles them. He was pursued because all previously hired for that position were requested not to return by Lummi leaders. Tom has been thanked by many Lummi for taking care of them in that capacity.

Most people at Lummi who know Tom and June know their spiritual beliefs, and many view them as spiritual leaders. They have received many comments in the last few years about how they're part of the community. One elder calls them "Mr. and Mrs. Lummi". Another elder asked them to put on a children's camp so her great grandchildren could learn about Jesus.

This summer they will direct the 6th annual Jesus Quest Children's Bible Camp. Tom and June are sought for counsel because people know that what is shared with them will be kept confidential. This gives the Coxes openings to speak into lives spiritually. Hospital visitation, and jail chaplaincy for June are some of their other services which the Lummi value.

Their roles as educators gave Tom and June a platform for entering the community. Now they are as widely known and respected for their other roles, which spring from their faith in Jesus. ■



# “Quick, I need ‘Treaty Four’ right away!”

By Mark and Beth Ward

OUR FRIEND, DON (not his real name) rushed in from an important meeting with urgent need for this document. Amidst the thousands of documents in the archives I was able to immediately locate the folder and hand it to him.

Don had hired Beth and me part-time as archivists for the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. FSIN is the provincial governing body of the 70+ local First Nation bands of Saskatchewan. Don, a Cree friend, worked in FSIN’s land claims department.

On the first day of work, Beth and I were taken to a room about 400 square feet in size. Several shelves of organized files stood at one end. In the middle of the room sat around 100 boxes overflowing with very valuable legal and historical records. Our job was to organize, safeguard, and make these documents easily accessible for research. That’s what we did for the next five years.

This put us in a position to rub shoulders with Native people we normally couldn’t have spoken to - including the Grand Chief of the FSIN. Office Christmas parties, chatting over coffee, invitations to after work social events naturally happened as we worked with these professionals. Over the years Beth and I received positive feedback at times from



researchers who were able to easily locate vital information needed from the land claims archives.

In our work outside of the FSIN, it made a very good impression to other Native people that we were employed there. This community anchor role opened doors for witness.

Every summer, our department hired Native university students as research interns. These bright young adults are potential leaders. We got very close to one such young lady. She adopted us as family. She said Mark reminded her of her dad. We helped her paint the house into which she had moved. She came to our place for Mark’s 50<sup>th</sup> surprise birthday party. She became a friend with whom we could naturally share the Gospel in a way that could be heard. We still keep in touch with her.

Many coworkers knew we were Christians. Hopefully, we represented the Savior well through our work, character, and attitude. Beth and I were glad to serve the First Nation community in their quest for justice. We trust the Gospel gained credibility and a better hearing by the Native leadership who became our acquaintances and friends. ■



✦ Mark and Beth worked at the FSIN in Regina, Saskatchewan from 2000–2005.

# From the Talking Circle

By Tim Bryce, Program Director



RELATIONAL EVANGELISM and discipleship is the focus of missionaries serving with NAIM. Hanging out with Native people in order to make Christ known is the passion that defines them.

The role of the community anchor is the focus of this NAIMNews. What is a community anchor? You might be saying, “Oh, you mean a tentmaker

don't you.” Actually, I don't. A tentmaker, as commonly understood, is a role assumed by a missionary because he/she cannot be a traditional missionary in that particular location, or they lack the funds to be a full-time missionary. A community anchor is the opposite of this.

Community anchors take jobs because they believe it is a better way of reaching people for Christ in some Native communities. They take a job where they are under the authority of a Native employer, becoming a working member of the community. In doing so, they become an integral part of the community, working with and for the people. This gives the community anchor a unique platform to model the Christian life.

Long-time NAIM staff, David and Diane Norman have employed this community anchor role off and on for many years in Tacoma, Washington. Read David's description of this role from as far back as 1992:

I meet with about 170 elementary school kids who are anywhere from full to 1/16 Native. They represent over 125

families plus family networks. I try to meet, or at least call, all the parents/guardians of my kids at least once a year. I also get the parents involved in two field trips I put on each year.

As serious problems occur in some of these families, I have been able to share the gospel and Biblical principles in dealing with those problems. I have also been called in by parents to counsel older siblings because of my relationship with their younger children. I hand out 30 Indian Life magazines and try and get them to recycle them among their fellow Native students. I have been given an open door to every Native home I have come in contact with because educating their children is a high priority among most Native parents.

I am also a member of the Western Washington Indian Education Consortium. I have been nominated for a leadership position in this Consortium but so far have declined as I see this as counter productive to deeper involvement with the local families.

Native communities have changed a lot in the last 60 years that NAIM has been around. These changes have caused NAIM to see the community anchor role as vitally important in the evangelism and discipleship of Native people. We still need more traditional missionaries, but there is also a need for people who will serve as working members of Native communities, while living whole-heartedly for Jesus Christ. NAIM is committed to recruiting Christians that will take their talents, skills, and education, and step into these community anchor positions. Would you be willing to consider a community anchor role with NAIM? ■

June 11th-13th, 2010

Ottawa, Ontario

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ALL ARE WELCOME!

# Bugs and Streams for Christ



Will and Cindy Kraske live and serve as NAIM Community Anchors in Omak, Eastern Washington. They work in the local public school; tutoring and building relationships with the Native students, through which God is revealing Himself to these precious youth. Here Will shares one story of how God is using them in this unique, non-traditional ministry role.

By Will Kraske

SOME TIME AGO I SAT in the Sunday school room that I use as an office, asking God, “How does my love of science and my years of ministry among Native Americans fit into your scheme?” Such searching has characterized much of the past several years as we have sought to bring our ministry in Omak more in line with the gifts and talents God has given us. Part of the answer has come in the form of the Research Studies class at Omak High School.

My dissertation research has revealed how important it is that youth have experiences with success. For many Native youth, though they are capable, this does not happen in the realm of academics. So three years ago a few Native youth began the Research Studies class alongside me. The youth’s research on stream health took us all Fall to complete. Then they submitted their work to the National American Indian Science and Engineering Fair, and in March, we attended the competition. Here is an excerpt from the prayer letter we sent out following the trip:

Wow, four days in Albuquerque, New Mexico with the three Native students who spent this school year researching the health of the Omak Creek with me. We watched movies, hung out in the hotel room, toured Old Town Albuquerque and Isleta Pueblo with the Omak High School Native language teacher (who is originally from the area), and successfully competed in the 21st annual National American Indian Science and Engineering Fair.

At the Saturday morning awards ceremony, the three students were thrilled to learn they had earned first place



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**Bill Tarter**  
Executive Director

**Tim Higginbotham**  
Operations Director

**Clyde Cowan**  
Partnership Liaison

**Ron Hartwig**  
Human Resources Director

**Shelley Vaters**  
Finance Director

**Katie Pillsbury**  
NAIMNews Editor

To request more information, please contact us:

**CANADA**  
PO Box 39  
Delta, BC V4K 3N5

**USA**  
PO Box 151  
Pt. Roberts, WA 98281

Tel. 604-946-1227  
Fax 604-946-1465

E-mail: [office@naim.ca](mailto:office@naim.ca)  
Web: [www.naim.ca](http://www.naim.ca)



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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.



**Find us on Facebook**

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®, 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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**The Journey of Freedom**

On June 11, 2008 Prime Minister Stephen Harper extended an apology to the First Peoples of Canada and asked for forgiveness for the historic wrongs and abuses experienced as a result of the Indian Residential School policy.

*"Bugs" continued*

medals in the 11th grade "team" category. And they wore those medals through all three flights that brought us back to Spokane, Washington that evening. Later, on the drive home, one of the young men shared, "You don't know how much this means!" He went on to explain that it was not unusual for them to receive awards for athletics, but it was a first for them to receive an award for something academic.

Even with this academic focus our hope for spiritual impact remains! Within the context of the public school system, we aim to lovingly and sincerely pursue the spiritual opportunities God provides. And it has been fun to see the doors that the students open! One day I walked into class to find one teasing, inquisitive student had written on the board the old acronym for BIBLE:

Two years later, a National Forgiven Summit will be held at the Ottawa Civic Centre on June 11-13, 2010. On June 12, there will be an official response to our Prime Minister's request and there will be a release of forgiveness. The Summit will bring together thousands of Native and non-Native peoples who share a common vision for peace, prosperity and greater freedom for the First People's and for our nation! The three-day summit will broadly follow three themes: gathering and witnessing unity of purpose, forgiveness protocols, and a celebration of freedom that forgiveness imparts.

Over the last several months, in preparation for this spiritual response, a national coalition of individual First Nations, Inuit and Métis Canadians have been travelling from province to territory to make ready the hearts of the people to release forgiveness. NAIM staff has been praying for Chief Kenny Blacksmith who is leading this initiative, and for the Journey of Freedom. Churches across Canada are standing together to celebrate the freedom that forgiveness brings. We ask that you bathe this event in prayer before, during, and after too. A great message of healing and freedom is sweeping Canada, and touching all of North America in the Name of our Lord, Jesus Christ! To learn more, see events happening in your area, and pray for this amazing revival, please visit: [www.i4give.ca](http://www.i4give.ca). ■

\* Reprinted with permission from Chief Kenny Blacksmith and the Journey of Freedom.

Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth. These students are curious about more than just stream health! We look forward to seeing what God will do in these young lives. ■

