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Ministries

Normans



Serving with First Nations to Reach All Nations

Dear Family and friends,

This newsletter is a bit different. A few months ago we got a call from a young lady who was working on her degree in communication. For her final project of the year she was to write a news story. She began searching the internet for ideas for a story. She came across NAIM's website and began reading the various missionary stories. For some reason she was interested in how we did ministry. She called NAIM asking for permission to contact us. Dave spent several hours on the phone with her. The following portion of our newsletter comes from excerpts of the article she submitted to her professor. We think she did a good job of capturing what our ministry has looked like over the years.

Thank you for your involvement and encouragement through these many years. Enjoy this brief summary of almost 40 years of ministry



Warmly,

Dave and Diane Norman



FAMILY

In June David had the distinct privilege of marrying a long-time family friend. Our daughter has been best friends with Rachelle since 8th grade. What a joy to share in her wedding to Bob, a mature Native believer who pastors a Nazarene church.

And speaking of weddings, our granddaughter, Kaya, recently accepted a proposal of marriage. She and Jacob will be married next August. We are delighted.

Love is in the air!



A murrow news service storytelling project

Native ministry

Missionaries built 40-year Native ministry on faith, relationship building and storytelling



Far left: Diane Norman. Far right: David Norman. The Norman's pose with their friends during a Wisdom Circle that they regularly held in their backyard to connect and share the Gospel with the Native community. Photo courtesy of David and Diane Norman.

By Loren Negron

“You may get killed, but you will never get bored.”

David Norman thought about these words as he pondered about all the jobs he worked throughout this life. He jumped from one job to another because he was bored. Norman worked as a salesman for a pet shop, sold Cadillacs and copiers, among other jobs.

But when Norman's missionary friend visited him at work and told him of an opportunity that might get him killed, but would satisfy his boredom, he knew he needed to say yes.

“Are you willing to kind of jump off a cliff and say yes to God?” Dave asked his wife, Diane, as they sat in their driveway with their three children.

Everyone prayed and obeyed the call to the mission field. Norman's friend served in Native ministry and

encouraged the Norman's to live on a reservation during the summer of 1984, followed by a months-long cross-cultural training with [North America Indigenous Ministries](#).

Since then, the Norman's have spent almost 40 years working with Natives across the country and now live in Colville, Washington, ministering to the Colville Tribes.

Storytelling with a Culture of Storytellers



It took many years of learning and immersing themselves into the Native culture for the Norman's to feel accepted in the Native community. Dave said that ministering to Natives is a slow process because it's built around relationships.

The Norman's rely on storytelling to bridge the gap between cultures. The Native culture is naturally a community of storytellers. They use storytelling to connect with people. "I can tell a story, and I won't be pointing the finger at anybody. I'm telling my story, so you don't feel threatened. You can listen to it because I'm not trying to coerce you into becoming a believer," Norman said.

The key is to know when to speak and to be led by the Holy Spirit. It can be easy to push people away by trying to coerce people to believe a certain way. However, through storytelling, the Norman's are able to share their testimonies and the miracles they've experienced in their life as a way to share the Gospel to the Native community.

*Diane and David Norman at the Tacoma Tribal Ministry Conference in April 2023.
Photo courtesy of David and Diane Norman*

During one of their Native ministry visits to a jail, Norman was conversing with a Native who was reluctant to hear about Jesus. So Norman said he asked if the man was willing to hear his story of how he accepted Jesus as his savior when he was 7 years old. At the end of the story, that man (and the 6 others that were meeting together) gave his lives to Jesus.

"In the Native culture, you allow God to work in people's lives," Norman said. "You simply pray for them, and pray for an opportunity to share a story."

Through storytelling, the Norman's have been able to expand their Native ministry in different ways. Dave and Diane have hosted Native conferences, including the Intertribal Gathering where people feast, drum and share stories about the Creator. They have held a men's warrior circle where they minister to Native veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder. They have hosted Wisdom Circles where they study Creator's Sacred Book and they've hosted an Honor Circle where the participants learn about respecting their marriage partner. They have also visited Natives in their homes, jails and schools to connect with the community better.

Contextualized Ministry



2017 Intertribal Gathering. Photos Courtesy of David and Diane Norman.

The Norman's walked into Native ministry knowing that they were bringing the Gospel to a people who have been hurt by missionaries in the past, said Corb Morgan, a long-time friend of the Norman's and co-founder of the Native ministry **Many Tribes Walking the Jesus Way**.

Being aware of the trauma and the history is part of the Norman's contextualized ministry approach, Morgan said. This entails being sensitive about Native heritage without trying to erase their culture.

"When missionaries come and they try to erase the culture that exists, that's always painful," he said.

Jan Morgan, Corb's wife who is a member of the Juaneno Band of Mission Indians Acjachemen Nation in California, said the Norman's had to learn to be patient and communicate without condemnation toward the Native community. "You can minister to people, but if they don't trust you, you have to be trusted in order for you to speak," she said.

The Morgan's have witnessed how the Norman's have immersed themselves into the Native culture. Morgan said the Norman's hold gatherings and conferences to honor the Native culture where they wear regalia themselves and dance with the community.

The Norman's also connected with Natives well by partnering with Indigenous leaders, Morgan said. As white people, it's sometimes difficult for the Norman's to speak to the Natives because they're not like them. Morgan even finds it challenging at times to connect with Natives, whereas his wife is more trusted since she's Native.

"If you're a missionary, you're never going to be one of them, but you can be there with them," he said.

Before moving to Colville about five years ago, the Norman's lived in Tacoma, Washington. Norman said he spent many years working with at least 18 elementary schools in the Tacoma-Seattle area, mentoring children and helping promote the Native culture. Because he built relationships with the children and their families, the Native community embraced him.

Norman said he remembers attending a powwow he helped organize and the Natives honored him with a drumming and dancing performance. They also made a red and black regalia for him to wear, which were his favorite colors. That was the day he and his wife knew they were accepted by the Native community.

"I think probably at times [our ministry] gives them some hope that maybe white people can change because it breaks the stereotype of what white people do and the way they think," Norman said.

Relationship Building Goes a Long Way

Ty Satiacum has known the Norman's since kindergarten. Norman was a Native education teacher and organized many activities in and out of the school to help Native students connect with their culture. Satiacum said he went on many trips with the Norman's, including a whitewater rafting trip in Colorado and a survival wilderness camp in Canada.

One of Satiacum's first trips with the Norman's was a camp in Colville where they ministered to the Colville Tribes. As a member of the Puyallup Tribe and descended from the Yakama and Upper Skagit Indian Tribes, Satiacum said it was an experience for him to share the Gospel to his Native community at 14 years old.

"It was powerful for yourself to get to tell somebody about your story, and then watch them feel impacted by it enough to where they want to ask Jesus Christ into their heart," he said.

From mission trips to 5 a.m. morning runs, the Norman's were people Satiacum could go to for anything. Satiacum said the relationship they built helped him overcome challenging seasons in his life.

"Just to hear his positivity and help, you know, kind of helped me through a tough situation. I remember there was a time when we had lost contact with each other for at least a good five to six years, and I was going through one of those tough times. I had to bust out the phone book to find his number," he said.

The Norman's success in their Native ministry is grounded on the level of care they've shown for the Native communities they serve. Satiacum said the Norman's have a lot of respect and knowledge of Native history, and their genuineness makes them trustworthy.

"Their life's work has literally been to spread the message and that's all they've done," he said. "They've never let anything deter them from spreading that message and staying involved with the Native community."