

Normans Serving With NAIM Ministries

Summer 2003



"Feathers flashing...head and hide rumble with the dancers...ribbons splay in fountains of color. Movement...spinning and rousing in the circle. Crowds of faces watch...follow the dancers. Pow Wow...feathers fan, beads blue and white, follow geometry. Ribbons trail the bobbing heads...moving...Tinklers step to drums and grass dancers swirl in orbit around and around...moving. Feathers flashing...head and hide...pow...wow...wow"

Lloyd Bennett

I saw the above quote in the Secwepemc Museum on the Kamloops reserve in British Columbia. I read it over and over as I let the colorful words paint the picture of what we were experiencing. Thirteen of us were at the ""Jesus Walks Among Us" gathering in Kamloops. It was a Christian Pow Wow, with 100-200 people from British Columbia and Washington state. Only a few years ago, Christian Pow Wow would have been an oxymoron. You couldn't be Christian and POW Wow. Those were two contradictory terms. But there is a new movement among Natives. More and more First Nations believers are finding freedom to worship in a culturally relevant way, i.e. using drums and wearing regalia.

With the approval of our church elders, we decided to take the teens from our Tacoma Indian Baptist Church and go evaluate. Our desire is to see our young people learn to think critically. Is this Scriptural? Are Biblical principles being compromised? What is syncretism?

It was interesting to debrief on the way home. There were varied responses:

Juanita, age 18 - ""It was weird to know that in our Native school at Chief Leschi in Tacoma, the drumming is used to worship animals and then to hear it here being used to worship the Lord. I felt really uncomfortable."

Tynasha, age 16 - "I'm kind of in the middle. I'm just not used to it."

Mate, age 16 - "I really liked it. Way back, people like Martin Luther and John Wesley took bar room tunes and wrote Christian words to them. The church didn't like it then, but now they are considered the great hymns of the faith. The same thing is happening today with Native music. I don't see why it is wrong to use their music with Christian words if people are being saved."

Taylor, chaperone and former missionary to Turkey - "This was a new exposure for me. I went in skeptical due to preconceived ideas associated with traditional religion. I prayed for sensitivity before I went and came away feeling positive about both the worship and evangelistic approach. When I heard that 4,000 people accepted the Lord as a result of this approach in Pakistan I was impressed. I know that there is a fascination with the Native culture overseas. I have seen it in Turkey"

Our goal as NAIM missionaries has always been to "Built the trust" with native people-to get them to trust us as white people. Years of broken relationships, broken treaties, residential school abuse, etc., has made that a challenge. But at this gathering I was personally challenged to trust Native leadership. However, there are two camps among Native leaders. One camp believes it is inappropriate to use drums and feathers when they worship. The other believes they can worship more relevantly by using their culture. Please pray with us, that we will have spiritual discernment, as we wrestle through these issues with our Native friends.

Overall this was a good experience for our group, We laughed a LOT, had safe travel, enjoyed the warm weather, and hopefully have learned to think through what is being taught and to evaluate those teachings in light of God's word.



Dave, leading group games with the teens at the gathering in Kamloops, BC



We are really proud of the teens. Recently they hammered out a vision statement for their group, the Resurrection Warriors.

Resurrection Warriors

*Our group exists to learn and apply Biblical Life Principles
Biblical principals will be learned from the reading and study of God's word. We will*

listen intently to the preaching and teaching we receive at church, as well as study on our own.

We will strive to exhibit friendliness to each other and to all newcomers. We will support and encourage all who need it.

It is our desire to develop into mature, honest, role models that are confident leaders in our church, school, work place and community. Ultimately, we want our love for Jesus to be evident to all those around us.

That's our goal, too - to see our kids impact their world for Jesus Christ. Thank you for making it possible for us to be here. Your prayers and financial support to NAIM continually encourage us.

Seeking truth as we lead,
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