



The 18.26 Network

A New Wave of Missions
Turning Your Vocation into Missions
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God continues to call people to serve using their vocation in different parts of the world by partnering with the work of missionaries. If you have felt called to missions, but not to the traditional way many go out, then consider if vocational missions is the way God would have you serve. Use your vocation to work in another country and partner with the missionary work there. Go to this page to learn more: [About Vocational Missions](#)

A Doctor and Family Called to Serve First Nation People



Patrick, Courtney, Ike & Lydia Walton

Bill and Mae Lee Letchworth, MTW missionaries serving in Northern Ontario with First Nation people, asked if the 18.26 Network could find a doctor willing to serve at the hospital on the reservation, which was in crisis because of a shortage of doctors. We prayed and God sent the Waltons to inquire about the

18.26 Network. **Is God calling you?** [Contact us!](#) Here's the Waltons' story.

1. Tell us a little bit about your journey that led you to minister vocationally on a First Nation Reservation in Canada.

Our journey to become vocational missionaries really took off after we got inspired during a missions conference at our home church in 2018. One of the main speakers discussed the option of vocational missions and Courtney and I discussed it afterwards and then we decided to start praying towards the idea...I mean, if the Lord was potentially calling us to this or not. It made sense in a few ways for us...I work as a doctor which is a great profession when it comes to getting into places to work that might not be receptive otherwise to traditional missionaries. Also, since working as a physician typically allows a salary that can support a family, we figured we might be able to get onto the mission field without the needed time required to raise support for our salary.

Over a short time, Courtney and I started to feel we were being led to work with Native Americans because we heard of the significant health disparities leading to them having a life expectancy of 20 years less on average than other Americans. So we did some searching and

found the 18.26 Network online and found they could link us to some traditional missionaries working with Native Americans. We thought I could get a job as a local physician in one of these Native American communities and help with health care and at the same time Courtney and I could also somehow help the efforts of the traditional missionaries with their gospel outreach.

Well, as we started working with 18:26, we got some names of people in the U.S. to contact. But, as a surprise twist for us from the Lord, before we could reach out to any of those on our list, we got contacted first. And instead of it being a Native American missionary contacting us, it was a Canadian First Nation reservation that found us because they were desperate for a Family Medicine physician to come and help. Understanding we could likely help with the healthcare needs there, we then turned our attention to the efforts of the local church in the area and wouldn't you know there was a traditional missionary couple from the U.S. that had moved to the reservation around one year prior. As if to make it even more clear this was from the Lord, the missionary couple serving there were from the same region of the U.S. that Courtney and I are from.

So, Courtney, the kids and I packed bags and flew to the area, interviewed with the hospital in need, and had a quick stay with the U.S. missionaries there over the New Year's break in 2019. We returned home feeling that the Lord had not closed any doors to the plan so we notified my employer and started getting all the documents ready for the move. About 10 months later when my contract was complete at home, we packed up and returned to the reservation in Canada ready to serve.

2. Who are some of the people you are developing relationships with in your new location?

First, we are certainly enjoying our relationship with the U.S. missionaries serving here. They are now like family to us. But also, we have been blessed with several local, welcoming friends since we have moved to our location. The local church we serve has believers in several different fields of work on the reservation...teaching, healthcare, industry, local politics, ministry...and so we are getting educated quickly first hand on the local culture and community framework.

One special person the Lord wasted no time putting in our lives is a loving elder woman who has basically adopted us into her family and social network. She takes us to so many of the First Nation functions and community events. She loves teaching us her traditions and customs. My kids think of her as a surrogate grandmother now and she loves them like her own.

We have also befriended another doctor on the reservation from a different region of Canada who has been working with the reservation for several years and he has been a close friend shedding light into the local culture from an outside perspective and also helping me get more comfortable with any differences in the Canadian healthcare practices when compared to the U.S.

3. What has been your most rewarding experience since moving to a First Nation Reservation in Canada?

This is difficult to pin down. Probably the most rewarding experience is not one isolated experience but is actually the cumulative effect of all the great relationships we are now blessed to be a part of since moving here. My whole family is experiencing love from so many people here and hopefully they are feeling love from us too. It all is from the Lord and the Lord is so good!

Also, I can't overemphasize the joy of serving Christ hand-in-hand with my wife...being in it all together 100%. A section of Scripture that became a guide to us during our transition to the field was Philippians 2:1-4, "So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any

participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, and being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."

Numbers and Updates

Not a number person? Think - numbers represent people - that's important.

26 people have applied to be vocational missionaries with the 18.26 Network,

10 people are working and serving in a country of their choice, and they are in

6 countries around the world,

13 people are looking for a job and place to serve in a global city.

An Update about Karina Legradi Starnes, one of our first vocational missionaries and who married another missionary, Jacob Starnes: She and Jacob are praying for God to lead them to know what He wants for them in the future.

Praise and Prayer

Thank you for your prayers for vocational missionaries serving, for the ministry and advancement of the 18.26 Network.

Praise that:

- Over 50 people have submitted interest forms about being a vocational missionary
- The 10 people serving on the field are actively engaging people and connecting well with the mission team and the local church

Pray for:

- The 9 applicants who are looking for employment opportunities in other countries
- Protection physically and spiritually for those on the field as they go about their daily lives

[Find Out More About 18.26 Network - Vocational Missions](#)



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Serving people who work, live and minister globally

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