



Ken & Thurleen Bain

VIENNA FIRST BAPTIST

About the Family

As retired professionals and people of little means, Ken and Thurleen Bain were unlikely prospects to be called as active missionaries. They are the parents of five with 22 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Already with 45 years of ministry experience in 2007, the couple tells of hearing the still small voice of the Holy Spirit speak simultaneously but separately to both of them, "Why don't you think about going to Arizona?"

The forgotten O'odham people group, distinguished as the Desert People and the River People needed to hear about Jesus. In perspective, Ken had just decided that he and Thurleen could not afford to take off time to put together a missions team to go to a pioneer area of unreached Native America. But God raised up support from unlikely sources, and the Bains were living on the Tohono O'odham Reservation in just six weeks. It remains likely that Ken and Thurleen are still the only non-native missionaries to have been invited to live in the western districts of the vast closed Tohono O'odham Reservation, which is larger than Connecticut. They learned near the end of their first year that four decades of successive Home Mission Board missionaries, who traveled regularly into the reservation, had come to an abrupt end when the missionaries were expelled with threats of perceived violence. It was indeed by Providence that the Bains were invited by the Indians to live and work in exactly the same location more than 40 years later. Thurleen continues boldly in the ministry despite suffering a serious stroke while serving on the Reservation in 2015.

About My Church Plant

Developing ministry on the Reservation was a learn-as-you-go experience. There were no textbooks. Ken and Thurleen worked with extreme caution to both learn the culture and to avoid offending it. After the first year, the Bains were able to bring Indian pastor Pete Reede (a descendent of Geronimo) back to the Midwest for a week of preaching.

Ken asked Brother Pete, "Assuming God lets us return to the desert a second year, what would you recommend that we could best do to be a help to the Indian churches?"

Without hesitation he replied, "Well Ken, there was this man in the Bible. As long as he held up his arms, the army of Israel prevailed. Then two people came and rolled up a rock for him to sit on, and they held up his arms until the enemy was defeated." Pete didn't have to say more. Ken and Thurleen's heart calling was to do exactly that.

Find out how you can
Pray.
Participate.
Provide.

PRAY.

For churches as they prepare to send out missionaries to push back lostness in Native America.
For receptive hearts among the people in villages where these missionaries will serve.
For churches and individuals to partner with missionaries and to give of their time, talents and funding support.
For the Father to send more workers into His harvest to join these missionaries.

PARTICIPATE

Connect as a Sending Church or a Supporting Church with a missionary's work
Commit to long-term missions support with your missionary partner.
Be involved in supporting missionaries and their families.
Pray for missionaries.

PROVIDE

Many missionaries build a team to join their ministry in prayer, participation, and provision. These friends, family and churches support missionaries beyond the tithes and offerings given within the church plant. Visit sendnetwork.com/PlanterFunding for NAMB's policy on providing for church plants.

God has taught the Bains how to connect the dots He places before them, and it is impossible to argue with the results. It was by grace that the Holy Spirit made the Bains one with the Native Christian families. After four years by themselves with the Natives, God sent another couple, and a week later another couple, all sharing exactly the same missions philosophy, theology and methodology. Now there are four couples in the network of Sonoran Desert Regional missions with at least two more missionaries on the way. All work in concert to extend the gospel to the O'odham people in the region, as well as some work among the Apaches. The Hikiwan church had been abandoned in a mean-spirited way by another denomination. The church asked the Bains to help them reorganize independently, and in only a few months voted to join the Catalina Baptist Association. Ken and Thurleen have held up the arms of both the Native churches as well as the other regional missionaries. Ultimately with years of strong foundational teaching and now with anointed Native pastoral leadership, the church is experiencing powerful growth. All over our reservations the Native churches have seen dozens and dozens baptized. A great breakthrough in the northern districts of the Tohono O'odham Nation has resulted in a true New Testament church. The combined regional ministries have hosted and facilitated more than 100 visiting missions teams, including more than 2,000 individuals. A number of the missions teams have now returned year-after-year, developing relationships and discipleship with Native Christians. The Bains and their associates strive to utilize this great resource while very carefully insisting that the visitors avoid tripping over Native cultures. In addition to VBS, Bible Clubs, and adult ministries, they have completed more than 8,000 square feet of construction in the past four years, primarily church buildings. Ken is currently overseeing the construction of a 4,000 square foot missions house at Hikiwan. God provides all of the funding, as required.

namb.net