ONWARD
NEWS, STORIES, AND UPDATES FROM THE NORTH AMERICAN BAPTIST FAMILY

Shaped for Mission
God forms and shapes us for His glory as a missional people in this world pg. 18

Intercessor
November prayer calendar pg. 32
December prayer calendar pg. 34

Formed for Mission
Developing Christ-minded leaders who make a difference in the world at Taylor Seminary pg. 6

CHURCH INVESTORS FUND • HERITAGE COMMISSION • NAB • SIOUX FALLS SEMINARY • TAYLOR SEMINARY
WHITE CROSS • WOMEN’S MINISTRY • YOUTH MINISTRY
God forms and shapes us for His glory as a missional people in this world pg. 18

In This Issue

Harvesting Abundance
Jeremy Putz pg. 4

Formed for Mission
Allan Effa pg. 6

It’s Not Over until God Says It’s Over
Fabiola Campos pg. 10

Gathering with Purpose
Bryce Roskens pg. 12

Stories from Springside Baptist Church
Mike Anderson pg. 12

Jillian’s Story
Jillian Simon pg. 13

What Keeps Formation Leaders from Being Formed
Dr. Jim Renke pg. 14

Shaped from the Beginning
John A. Siewert pg. 16

Shaped
Kent Carlson pg. 18

What Is God Saying to Our Church and Leadership?
Susan Reese pg. 22

Formation Resources
NAB Executive Team pg. 23

Shaped Unexpectedly
Shelley Roxburgh pg. 24

Little Is Much
Bob Glim pg. 26

8 Questions with Rev. Larry Burd
Church Investors Fund pg. 28

The Discipline of Caring for the Least
Keir Hammer pg. 31

Intercessor
North American Baptist Conference pg. 32

Interested in extra copies?
If you would like additional copies of this edition of Onward to share with others, contact us:

communications@nabconf.org | (916) 797-6222
“We shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us.” Winston Churchill quipped this phrase in October 1943 in a speech to the House of Commons about rebuilding the bomb-shattered Commons Chamber structure. While some urged the construction of a more modern architecture, Churchill argued that the traditional arrangement with two opposing sets of seats fostered an atmosphere that “was responsible for the two-party system which is the essence of British parliamentary democracy.”

At its core meaning, Churchill’s speech was reminding those reconstructing after a bombing blitz that they would be molded and fashioned by the mundane structures that they themselves were constructing.

To leverage Churchill’s words into a more spiritual environment, let me twist this adage in some new directions.

• We shape our churches, and afterward our churches shape us.
• We shape our inner perspectives, and afterward our inner perspectives shape us.
• We shaped the rhythms of our lives, and afterward those rhythms shape us.
• We shape our spiritual communities, and afterward our spiritual communities shape us.
• We shape our families, and afterward our families shape us.
• We shape our spiritual relationships, and afterward our spiritual relationships shape us.
• We shape our souls, and afterward our souls shape us.

The point is unmistakable. Take great care! We are continually being shaped—formed, fashioned, molded, bent, designed, transformed—by elements in our lives that we ourselves have already shaped.

As Christ followers, we desire deeply to be formed into the very image of our Savior and King (2 Corinthians 3:18). It is so vitally important that we submit our souls—our very inner beings—to the shaping work of a good and gracious God. And in being formed by Him, we must also seek to carefully discern His guidance as we shape the spiritual structures around us, since afterward they too will shape us.

This edition of Onward focuses on how God forms and shapes us for His glory as a missional people in this world. As you read it, I pray that the Holy Spirit would use an article, a sentence, even a phrase to draw you into His shaping power.

And because the concept of being formed or shaped by God is so Biblically ubiquitous and profound, the 2018 Triennial Conference in Edmonton will focus on the theme Shaped for Mission. My heart’s desire is that you and I will recommit to a journey today, which will continue at Triennial, to be fully formed (shaped) into the image of Christ.

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:14–19 ESV)
Harvesting Abundance

Jeremy Putz
Lead Pastor
Central Baptist Church, Edmonton, Alberta
A few weeks back, our staff team had the opportunity to eat together with a young couple from our church who is visiting home from Africa for a few weeks. Both nurses in their twenties, in 2013 they followed God’s call to serve Him by nursing at a medical clinic. Upon arrival, they found that the clinic was not as healthy as they had been told, and by necessity they stepped into the role of overseeing the whole operation. In addition to this surprise, the years that followed brought cultural challenges, missing family and friends, and, recently, finding out that they are unable to have kids.

Yet, despite the hardships, they continued to work and serve with persistently strong vision, focus, and effectiveness. Today, their reach is growing beyond anyone’s expectations. Just four years after their arrival, they oversee a growing network of nearly fifty clinics throughout a nation where there is only one doctor for every 40,000 people. Through their work, lives are literally being saved every day.

But to me, more striking than the work they’re accomplishing is the people that they’re becoming. In just four years, this young couple has transformed from a fairly ordinary, Canadian couple into world-changing, Kingdom warriors. As they speak, maturity and strength flow out of them. They are focused. They are energized. They are strong. And they are impacting countless others every day with physical and spiritual good news. If you met them four years ago you’d think, “They’re a great couple!” If you met them today you’d conclude, “There must be very few people like this in the world.”

As we prayed for them, I felt God speak these simple words to my heart: “This is the power of church.”

Through tears, my friends from Africa shared with us a recent and very personal transformation story. As they processed the news of not being able to have kids, God gifted them with a new vision—to grow their family through adoption. Through this vision, He brought them from their initial feelings of pain, anger, and resentment to a new place of true excitement. As a result of God’s grace, you may hear them say with joy, “God’s plan is always better!” Their heart for Africa will now be expressed in their family as they seek to love and welcome orphaned African children, not just into their clinic but into their family. What a miracle in every way! God loved them through their pain, and now from God’s deep resources they will share His love with others. This is the Kingdom.

I want this in my life. I want to know God, grow in community, and increasingly become one who truly and actively loves every person in my life. I hope you do too. So let’s be honest together about our broken places that still need mending. Let’s intentionally and regularly welcome Jesus’s presence and voice into our relationships. Let’s be patient, because the transformation that God brings is nearly always a slow and somewhat ordinary process. Let’s take the pain of life and plant it into the soil of church community. And let’s look forward to the harvest of strength, character, and hope that is sure to come.
Taylor’s mission is encapsulated in the phrase, developing Christ-minded leaders who make a difference in the world. Our bottom line is not merely to shape theological thinkers who write brilliant essays or achieve high grades on exams, or even to raise up winsome leaders; our ultimate aim is to equip people for mission.

One of our Taylor distinctives is a commitment to spiritual formation. We invest in the spiritual formation of students in multiple ways, not so we can cultivate mystics and contemplatives, but because mission flows from who we are into what we do.

One of my favourite definitions of spiritual formation comes from J. Robert Mulholland Jr., who says it is “the process of being formed in the image of Christ for the sake of others.”

Every religion has spiritual practices that foster spirituality, but Christianity is unique in its outward focus. Buddhists seek personal enlightenment, Hindus hope to reduce bad karma, and Muslims engage in rigorous disciplines to score points on the merit/demerit scale and win a spot in paradise. Christian spirituality is recognized by the fruit of the Spirit in a life engaged in mission.

We don’t devote ourselves to prayer, reading, and scripture meditation in order to store up rewards or solely for personal well-being. The purpose of these practices is to become better reflectors of Christ in the world. We gather with others for corporate worship so we can be sent out into the world once more with renewed energy, perspective, and nourishment to participate in God’s mission of healing all creation.

It is worth reminding ourselves that the Church does not have a mission; rather, God has a mission, and our role is to be the hands and feet of Christ. Everywhere there is brokenness, everywhere false idols are being worshiped, everywhere God’s justice is being subverted, there is our place of mission. And our means of healing and renewal is to be on the path of healing ourselves.

It is quite possible to devote hours a day to prayer and memorize large portions of the Bible while remaining proud, judgmental, and bitter, so intentional discipleship is aimed at ongoing transformation: spiritual practices are the means, not the end.

The process at Taylor varies according to each student, but typically a student meets with their faculty advisor where academic and spiritual mentoring begins. Program
students must also enroll in spiritual direction, provided at no cost to the students—bi-weekly meetings that could involve readings, assignments, prayer, counseling, and the integration of spiritual disciplines like prayer, fasting, Bible memorization, and service.

Taylor also works with the highly-regarded Arrow Leadership organization to provide comprehensive and confidential spiritual assessments of students at the beginning and middle of their studies. This provides each student and their mentor a snapshot of where growth is taking place and where growth is needed.

Although each student’s experience is unique, all students in the master of divinity and master of arts in intercultural studies programs must satisfactorily complete thirty hours of spiritual formation. There is no other seminary in North America that we know of that requires this level of commitment to a spiritual formation process.

Because the proof of formation is missional engagement, the best test of the effectiveness of our training is found in the lives of our students and graduates. Nearly every one of our graduates shares a story of the unique way in which they have been formed for mission.

Walk into any hospital in the Edmonton area, or many of our nursing homes and hospices, and you will bump into Taylor grads who are offering spiritual care to people in crisis.

Noel emigrated from the Philippines and paid for his master of arts in intercultural studies degree by working as a machinist. One of the core courses in his program, Integral Mission, helped expand his understanding of the broad contours of God’s mission of reconciliation and the healing of creation. Noel’s practicum placement was with a chaplain who helps reintegrate offenders who are being released into the community. I guided his major research paper that focused on interviewing people who have spent a significant amount of time in correctional institutions and who have become well-adjusted, crime-free citizens. These were factors in helping Noel grow as a follower of Christ and refine his vocational direction. Today Noel serves as a chaplain to low-risk offenders, picking them up from prison, bringing them to church-based programs, and spending time one on one with inmates.

Joanne founded an organization that supports women who have been subjected to domestic violence, and she leads healing retreats in Rwanda for women who suffered trauma during the genocide. Stephen just started a ministry to Muslims in the Edmonton region. Ryan is planting a church in small-town Saskatchewan. These and many more have been shaped for partnership in God’s mission.

One of the great joys of theological education is to see students grow right before your eyes—not only in knowledge and skill but in character and fruitfulness.

The mission of God remains unfinished—redemption and restoration still a work in progress. Jesus’s call to follow Him is not about intentions or efforts, but is rooted in being like Him.

---

Dr. Allan Effa recently marked twenty-five years of teaching at Taylor Seminary. He is the Ray and Edith DeNeui Professor of Intercultural Studies at Taylor Seminary and has extensive international ministry experience; he was raised on the mission field in Brazil and served as an NAB missionary in Nigeria before serving in pastoral, then academic, ministry. He and his wife, Karen, have two grown daughters.

Taylor Seminary Dessert Reception

Taylor College and Seminary is hosting a dessert night for all alumni and friends. Join in this Triennial tradition, and connect with old classmates, friends, and fellow alumni! In addition to enjoying dessert and good conversations, hear the story of continued renewal at the seminary, including the growing partnership with Sioux Falls Seminary and the significant, innovative changes taking place in theological education. The signs of God’s work at Taylor are unmistakable.

Hymn Sing

Taylor Seminary warmly invites you to join us for a special pre-Triennial hymn sing! It will be held on the Taylor campus in the newly renovated lecture theatre, Stencel Hall; we’ll enjoy some of the great hymns of the faith, share some laughter and memories, and even have a special guest or two.

Shaped To register for Triennial visit: nabconference.org/triennial
This Triennial will be a special time of gathering and celebrating with others from NAB churches in Canada and the US, as well as with international missionaries and ministry partners from around the world. Your heart will be encouraged by authentic community as you refresh long-standing friendships and forge new ones. Your voice will join hundreds of others in worship and praise, and you will hear God's truth communicated clearly and passionately. You will hear stories of how God is shaping churches, pastors, missionaries, and others from the NAB family and then sending them into this world for His glory.

LEARN MORE AND REGISTER ONLINE www.nabconference.org/triennial
OR REGISTER BY PHONE (916) 797-6222 EXT. 243
Speakers

MARK BUCHANAN  DON DAVIS  STEPHANIE FAST  BARRY JONES

Special Events

WOMEN’S LUNCHEON  YOUTH PASTORS & SPOUSES DINNER  ALL-CONFERENCE RECEPTIONS

TAYLOR DESSERT RECEPTION  ALL-CONFERENCE BBQ  SIOUX FALLS SEMINARY BREAKFAST

Breakouts

Presentations will highlight missionaries, both globally and locally, from our NAB family, as well as church leaders who are pursuing authentic transformation in their missional endeavors.
It’s Not Over until God Says It’s Over

Fabiola Campos
Women’s Ministry Leadership Team

My mother took me to a children’s home when I was only three years old, where I spent the next ten years. Even though it was a good place, I rarely saw my mother; I did not know who my father was, either. A lot of things go through the mind of a child when the two most important people in her life are missing.

Growing up, I did not know what life was supposed to be about. I thought it consisted of not breaking any rules and protecting myself from the horrors of abuse and exploitation I had seen others experience. Yet despite all I did, I eventually found myself under the grip of corrupt people more powerful than myself. Questions flooded my young mind as I went through appalling experiences that are too difficult to comprehend. I remember countless nights thinking about the future, life, love, but more than anything about God. “Does He care? Is this ever going to end? Is my life worth it?” For a long time, no one could answer these difficult questions.

I am sure I’m not alone in this. Many people have gone through similar or even more difficult circumstances. Difficult circumstances may take away a sense of security and, even more, a sense of purpose. How could my life have any everlasting impact when the future seems so uncertain?

The Bible is filled with people in very difficult experiences. Take Ruth for example. One day she was happily married, the next day she was a widow; one day she was comfortable in her home country, the next day she was an immigrant;
one day her needs were met by her husband, the next day she was picking food left by those working in the fields. She was a poor immigrant widow carrying the weight of months of suffering and uncertainty with few chances of success.

It is at the end of our abilities that we become aware of God’s invitation to find in Him what we thought was lost. This is precisely the truth Ruth came to. She told her mother-in-law, “Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God” (Ruth 1:16 NIV, emphasis added). Ruth came to realize there was nothing in her past or present that would change. There was nothing to gain by staying where she was, so she took on the subtle—almost hidden—invitation of a new journey. Someone rightly said, “When you have nothing left but God, you become aware that God is enough.”

That realization also came to me in a powerful way. For many years, I was not willing to talk about my life. I thought if I hid the wounds they would naturally heal. How little I knew that embracing my suffering would transform my wounds into an instrument in God’s hands. He uses every circumstance, every wound, and every tear to shape us for His mission and purposes. Ultimately, isn’t this what happened at the cross? It is there where God gave the answer to suffering, pain, and uncertainty. The cross—the most powerful weapon of shame and guilt and suffering—became God’s transforming power for those who embrace the Suffering Savior.

My weaknesses and difficulties have found their purpose in Christ. God has used my experiences to help others make sense of the chaos and pain that surround us—even if it is just a little. I am glad to have discovered there is a purpose for my life. God’s story of redemption is not exclusive to Ruth or to me; it is all over the Bible! It culminates in the story of redemption through Jesus Christ. It is an invitation to exchange our narratives of suffering and fear for a narrative of hope and joy.

Shaped for Mission will be the 15th NAB Triennial that David and I will be attending. Despite all the effort when our four children were growing up, it was still worth it because we renewed friendships and made new ones. We left feeling like we had been at a family reunion.

My highlights were always the women’s event—usually a luncheon. We caught up with each other’s lives and even shared dreams about the future. When we gathered, we felt encouraged, inspired.

Scripture reminds us, “Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:24–25 NIV).

When we gather as NAB women, there is joy, care, learning, and much laughter. When we are surrounded by so many others, we are reminded we are part of something bigger than ourselves.

The Women’s Ministry Leadership Team invites you to join us around the table on Friday, July 27, 2018. Hear how other women are letting the Potter mold and shape them to be on mission for Him in their neighborhoods and communities.
As I’ve listened to youth pastors who have organized the Gathering over the years, I know their hearts have always yearned to give students a week where they don’t just get close to Jesus for a few days. Instead, they want an experience that will overflow into changed lives back at home, in school, and among their peers.

The 2017 Gathering was no different. It was more than a camp or conference experience. Student and leader teams served faithfully with great attitudes during the day and made a positive difference in the communities they were serving.

One of our teams at the Gathering partnered with Magnolia Baptist Church in Anaheim to help put on a basketball camp for local kids. Our students loved the interaction with the camp kids, the organization of the event, and the purpose of reaching kids with the Gospel. One night after a group debrief time, a student mentioned that he would like to help organize a similar basketball camp in our area next summer. This would pull in a whole host of local volunteers and could teach much more than basketball.

We know that it’s not just about doing a mission trip; it’s a call to a missional style of living and serving as the hands and feet of Jesus in California, Iowa, or wherever we find ourselves.

_For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Galatians 5:13–14 ESV) _

Stories from Springside Baptist Church

Mike Anderson  
Youth Ministry Leadership Team

The Gathering 2017 was a special trip for teens from Springside Baptist Church. Not only was it the first flight for some and a great conference experience, but God worked in their hearts in ways that have transformed how they live life back home.

- Kyle and Brody were both challenged with putting less emphasis on material items.
- Abby grew in being willing to serve in any capacity and seeking a servant’s heart always, regardless of what is asked of her.
- Lexi spoke of working as a team and how she was impacted with the importance of working joyfully for God and others.

Because of the transformation of these teenagers this summer at the Gathering, Springside is seeking out opportunities in our community to be the hands and feet of Jesus in a whole new way.
I was excited for my first trip across the country through the Gathering in 2014, but not as much about the work site I would be serving on. I was stuck helping a lady clean out her house because she was a hoarder.

Working with Miss Gail was very overwhelming at first, with all of the stuff she had stored in her tiny mobile home. She had problems even letting us into her house, let alone throwing out some of her unneeded belongings. Yet, as Miss Gail told stories about her life, I wanted to know more. She has gone through so much in her life, and yet she was the bravest, most caring lady I had ever met. She shared how she watched her husband get stabbed to death by an intruder coming into their home. To this day, she still goes to parole hearings to make sure he stays behind bars.

After I got home that summer, Miss Gail and I kept in touch. One day I asked her how a parole hearing went and how she was handling it. I later found out as we were preparing to return this summer that Miss Gail had shared the impact the youth had on her life and told how not even one her friends and family members had thought to ask her about the parole hearing, but one 7th grade girl from Iowa had. I was moved to tears, and still am when I think about it. When I returned to her house for the Gathering in 2017, the greeting I got from her was nothing short of heartwarming.

On this trip, we wanted to get back into her bedroom to clean it out. Many people asked her, but she didn’t feel comfortable letting them into that part of her home. However, when I asked, she looked at me for a few seconds and said, “Okay, Jilly. You and a few people that you choose can come in with me.” Three years ago she would barely let anyone in her house, but now she trusted me enough to allow me into a place where she was her most vulnerable.

The NAB Gathering is such a special trip. It gave me the opportunity to meet Miss Gail, a woman who changed my life forever. It also gave me a servant’s heart, something I hope to carry with me for the rest of my life. I no longer want to do things for the good of myself; I want to share the love of Christ with people.
The old saying goes, “The cobbler’s children go barefoot.” A more modern way to say it might be, “The mechanic’s car never runs,” or “The plumber’s pipes always leak.” Whatever the saying, the meaning is the same: They are so busy taking care of the needs of others they aren’t tending to their own needs. Could we add to these another statement, “Those leading transformation aren’t being transformed”?

We know transformation, or spiritual change toward Christlikeness, is the call of the Gospel (Romans 12:1). It takes honest, vulnerable, determined work to stay on that path, and it is work. Paul referred to it as such when he wrote, “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12 ESV).” We are all called to transformation, but there are expectations and patterns in the way we do church that make it hard for pastors to lead while on that path.

Pastors are expected to be the ones in the know. A pastor may be a servant who knows the Scriptures and is skilled at the methods of ministry, but spiritual growth requires a different set of skills and commitments. One who is being spiritually formed must stay dependent, humble, and honest about his/her own need. And these are tough traits to exhibit when people look to you.

Pastors often miss out on real community. Relationships in Christian community are like God’s chisel and mallet. Real community asks the hard questions and stays present for the uncomfortable answers. The role of pastor can make it a struggle to develop and maintain those kinds of relationships.

Pastors can feel the pressure of competing concerns in ministry. Leading people spiritually is what pastors live for, and doing it well is what provides for their livelihood. A pastor’s spiritual life, marriage, and even parenting become part of the job description. A church may expect their pastor to be proficient in every area. The temptation is for the pastor to create an image of having it all together to meet the church’s expectations. After all, the pastor’s livelihood depends on it.
Pastors may feel the pressure not to change. Change is disorienting. True transformation requires change. Real transformation will change a pastor’s leadership style, ministry priorities, and possibly theology. Knowing that change creates pain, pastors can feel the pressure not to change too much.

These challenges are rooted in the expectations of congregants, the culture at large, and even the pastor’s own self. After more than thirty years of pastoral ministry, I am convinced that pastors who run and finish the race with vitality have found others who will help them grow through these challenges. As a regional minister, my hope is to help leaders stay on the path of spiritual formation and missional faithfulness.

I ask questions. I try to ask questions that will encourage them to seek the Lord and be open to His work of changing them. How is a pastor taking care of his own soul? How has she seen God shaping her lately? What are the spiritual questions, or challenges, he’s been facing lately?

I encourage lay leaders to pay attention to the spiritual needs of their pastors. I share with leaders the need of pastors to take significant time for prayer, silence and solitude, study, and living in community. Pastors need the church to free them and to encourage them to take days of prayer and go on spiritual retreats and intentional sabbaticals that will keep them on the path of personal transformation.

I give of myself. I offer an open ear to listen, a caring heart to encourage, and a strong heart to bear the burdens of my partners in ministry. I want each pastor to know I am a brother who understands and wants to walk alongside in the journey of leading spiritually by growing spiritually.

Lastly, I practice the ministry of prayer. When God answers prayer, He moves the mission forward through servants who are being spiritually formed.

This all is an outworking of my own formation. I seek to keep it my priority to remain in close fellowship with Jesus, being changed by Him as I expend my effort in working out the salvation He’s given me.
The first conference of pastors and co-workers that would become the North American Baptist Conference met in Philadelphia, November 6–12, 1851. Today we would call that conference a game changer since it energized a fellowship with triennial meetings that is still going 166 years later. At the conference, there were only eight official members, but also attending were invited visitors and members of the host church, who were free to speak during the sessions. Several letters sent by pastors who were not able to make the journey to Philadelphia were read and were well received. The record we have today of the business sessions and the excerpts of messages at worship services come from the host pastor, Rev. Konrad Fleischmann, who was appointed secretary of the conference.

The major business items of the conference related to the need of the churches for materials in the German language. Their worship services were in German since the congregations were made up of immigrants who were much more at home in the German language than English. A German hymnal, periodical, and statement of faith and church order were discussed, with some assignments made for next steps. Also discussed was the training of those aspiring to be ministers in German churches.
Evenings were set aside for worship services. Rev. Johannes Eschmann, pastor in New York City and moderator of the conference, preached at the first worship service. The text was Luke 17:20–21, which closes with Jesus’ words “the kingdom of God is within you” (NIV).

The kingdom of God is a spiritual entity on earth, and so consequently can be composed of spiritual members only, who have become such only by God’s grace and the power of the new birth. [Rev. Eschmann] went on to compare God’s kingdom to the kingdoms of this world, how small and insignificant its beginnings were, and still are, but however, His kingdom is firmly founded on the foundation of the apostles and prophets; it will grow and march on to victory.

The next evening the message was brought by Rev. Alexander von Puttkammer, pastor in Buffalo, New York. The text was Hebrews 12:2: “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross.”

The believer has an ever present need of focusing his eyes upon Jesus [and] will regard Christ as the chief object of his thoughts and actions. . . . He is not only the chief object of our attraction, but also the constant object. The believer searches the scriptures daily and finds therein his nourishment. . . . But above all, love streams to us from the cross; because of love He was sacrificed for us; out of love He freely offered Himself.

Rev. Andreas Heinrich, pastor in Rochester, New York, was the preacher the following evening. The text was Luke 14:23: “Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in so that my house will be full.’”

It is a great mistake for believers to think they need only to fold their hands, reposing on the action taken by the pastor. Already at an early date they should be directed and then constantly reminded to diligently and wisely use their gifts which they have received from the Lord. . . . We shall use every means available, such as every believer’s testimony, the worship services including the preaching of the gospel, invitations to sinners in spoken or in printed form, to lead lost souls back to the heavenly King and to the supper of His Son.

Even though we might say it a little differently today, it has been such biblical preaching that has shaped North American Baptists for service and mission through the years. □
It was the summer of 2000, and our church had been in a season of very rapid numerical growth. In our little pond, we were the big fish. We were the local “Church of What’s Happening Now.” And with this never-ending hunger for experiencing even more outward success—which is, in popular religious culture, an obvious sign of God’s blessing—we felt the need to keep moving forward, to keep growing. Therefore, in preparation for our leadership team’s summer retreat, we all read a book on how to grow a very large church. The book, though, did not have the result we expected. When we opened our first meeting of the retreat with a discussion about the book, we immediately began to discuss the chapter about consumerism.

The essence of the chapter was that consumerism is one of the most powerful forces in contemporary culture and there is not much anyone can do about it. Therefore, the church that desires to grow larger is going to have to learn how to harness it, exploit it, and use it to accomplish the goal of more people coming to the church. Every man and woman at that retreat found that idea deeply troubling, actually offensive. This issue of consumerism became the lens through which we began to see some troubling truths about how our method of “doing church” was working contrary to our desire to teach people how to follow Jesus.
Our methods of outreach—how we attract people, how we get people to come to our church and stay at our church—none of this is value-neutral. Our methods of outreach and assimilation into the church are inherently connected to the spiritual formation of our people. We teach people about God and about our lives with God, shaping and forming them, by how we attract and keep them.

The more we talked about this, the more we were unsettled by the realization that our way of “doing church” was not simply a bait and switch kind of thing: “Come and accept Jesus as your Savior, and, oh yeah, once you’re in, now you have to reorient your entire life around His teaching.” Certainly, we were doing that, but the reality was far more insidious. Our method of outreach, where we appealed to the consumer demands of what people wanted in a church, was working against being formed into the likeness of Christ. No matter what we taught about what it means to be a follower of Christ, our method of doing church, our ways of attracting and assimilating people, was the louder voice. The medium is indeed the message.

We began to realize, and this was very troubling to us, that in order to help people effectively and truly, in the details of their lives, reorient their lives around the teachings of Jesus, we would have to help them unlearn the very things we used to attract them to our church in the first place. We realized we could never build disciples of Jesus at a church that was overly concerned with making sure that people’s consumer demands were catered to. The message of Christ was far more radical and beautiful than that. A decision to follow Christ, and to be a part of a local church, could not become just another consumer choice that people make.

Somewhere in this discussion, God gently but unmistakably began to expose much of what had been driving me, the juice that had been energizing me for the last few years. I began to see just how important it was to be known as a successful church and, more personally and embarrassingly, a successful pastor. This was painful to admit, but God was gracious enough to begin to reveal just how much I was motivated by my own personal ambition. And for a few minutes at that retreat I began to share, with a kind of stream of consciousness, just how important it was to me to be known, to be successful, to have a big church, to be impressive. And as I told on myself for a few moments, I had this sense of the Spirit of God saying to me, without any harshness or condemnation, but actually quite gently, “Well okay, but we’re going to be done with that now.”

That retreat, that encounter with God, changed our church. It changed me. Our leadership team and a strong, faithful core of committed Christ-followers began the long and arduous process of seeking to reorient our church around the formation of our souls into the image of Christ. We pursued, very imperfectly of course, the process of becoming a community of followers of Christ who were learning, in the details of our communal lives together, how to routinely and easily live as Jesus would live if He were living our lives. With God’s gracious help, and our stumbling, mistake-riddled efforts, it took us almost ten tumultuous years for the DNA of our church to begin to change. There’s a long, complicated story in all that, and it is definitely ongoing, and there are still many mistakes, failures, and challenges ahead of us, but with some small measure of success, we stopped being a “destination church” and we are solidly on the journey of becoming a church that is seeking, with God’s help, to be spiritually formed into the image of Christ.
At our last Triennial, in Sacramento in 2015, we celebrated the theme of *Sent*. We sought to focus our attention on the Great Commission of Jesus to go into all the world and make disciples. Our theme verse for that Triennial was John 20:21, where Jesus appeared to His disciples after His resurrection and said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” This sending of us into the world is, of course, a crucial and foundational aspect of being formed into the image of Christ, the Sent One.

This sending, though, forces us to ask some other questions. We are sent to do what? What is our task? What is the message that Jesus has sent us out with? What is the good news that Jesus has given us to proclaim and demonstrate? The message we have been given is that through the birth, life, teaching, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus our King, abundance of life, both now and forever, is given to all who will trust and follow Him. This is very good news. The Kingdom of God, through our King Jesus, is here among us. The rule of God is here. And this life lived under His leadership is a good and beautiful life. It is the best of all possible lives.

This is not merely a message of facts about God. It is an invitation to life, real life, now and forever. For us to proclaim this invitation to abundant life well and with integrity, this abundance of life must be working its reality into our own lives as individuals and as communities of faith. The life that we are inviting people to live must be the life that we are beginning to experience ourselves. In an increasingly post-Christian world, more and more of those who see themselves as outside the Christian faith will no longer be drawn to faith in Christ through consumer-based, high-quality Sunday programming. The coffee bar, the music, the children and youth programs, none of these things will have the same effect. What people really hunger for is reality. Power. Transformation. An authentic and vibrant life with God.

In light of this, our 2018 Triennial seeks to build on the 2015 Triennial with the theme of *Shaped*. Our theme verse is Paul’s life mission, from Colossian 1:28–29. Speaking of Jesus, Paul says, “He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me” (NIV). It was the great passion of the Apostle Paul to give everything he had to lead people into a mature life in Christ—to be formed, *shaped*, into the image of Christ.

This maturity in Christ is about our life now. It is certainly about our knowledge of God, about what we believe. This is crucial and foundational. But it is also about our actual lives, about who we are actually becoming. It is not an invitation to try really hard to become someone we know perfectly well we are not. That is exhausting, and it never lasts. This breeds either legalism or despair. Rather it is an invitation to authentic transformation now, where the character of Christ is being formed in me. Really. Where the fruit of the Spirit is beginning to characterize who I actually am. Where there is an increasing ease of obedience.

This is the good and beautiful life that all people hunger for—all people. Certainly, it is also a life of pain, sorrow, trials, challenges, sickness, and all the other nasty things out there. That is true for all who walk this earth. But for the follower of Christ there is this enthralling vision of the reality of life in the Kingdom of God today, a life that is increasingly permeated with love, patient in affliction, possessing a pervasive sense of well-being, spiritual power, and God’s peace, His shalom, that transforms us and flows through us. This is the life that God invites us to live. And it is a good and beautiful life, the best of all possible lives. And with the grace of God, and our intentional effort, it is possible for us to increasingly learn to live this life. That, wonderfully, *is* the good news! And the point, the end goal of this life of abundance in Christ, is not oriented around us, but it is for the sake of the world. Having been formed, *shaped*, into the image of Christ, we are *sent* out into this world that is precious to God with this good news that is being authentically worked out in our lives. ■
The life that we are inviting people to live must be the life that we are beginning to experience ourselves.
It was a beautiful summer experience at Crystal Springs Camp in Medina, North Dakota. As campers, we had been intentionally discipled by dedicated pastors and counselors. On the final evening of camp, the camp pastor spoke of committing our lives, our entire lives, to the Lordship of Christ. Several that night understood a call to vocational ministry while others understood they would serve God in a variety of vocations and roles in life.

As I reflect on that time in high school, I remember how many of us sought out mentors to help us discern the call we had understood at camp. One of my mentors guided me through the theologian J. I. Packer’s four-step process for discerning God’s will, which is in his book *God’s Will: Finding Guidance for Everyday Decisions*. First, if you feel that God is calling you to change or move in a certain direction, the calling must be within the parameters of what God allows in scripture. Therefore, my mentor and I sought out scripture. Colossians 1:9–10 states, “So we have not stopped praying for you since we first heard about you. We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding. Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better” (NLT). Discernment begins with humility in reading scripture, asking God to instill spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Second, there must be a “pneumatical” aspect, meaning you must feel that the Holy Spirit is nudging or pressuring you toward this change. So my mentor and I, along with peers, sought the Lord in listening prayer. Philippians 4:6–7 reminds us, “Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.” We acknowledged our shortcomings and anxieties and made our requests before the Lord. Then, we listened to what the Lord prompted within and amongst us and waited for what the Lord would reveal to us about our callings.

Third, trusted people within the body of Christ must, spontaneously and without solicitation, suggest that you make the change. My mentor and I prayed for God to affirm my gifts and callings through the affirmations of people who knew me well. In time, various people had significant conversations and affirmations with those of us in prayer regarding our call to serve God.

Lastly, the fourth step is the presence of an open door, or opportunity, through which you must walk by faith. Hebrews 11:6 says, “And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.” We understood that we are given enough faith for each day whether the daily rhythm appears to be fresh and light or overwhelming.

If all of these four have taken place, you should not just think about the change, you should make the change and follow the call that God places on your heart. Often these changes require more wholehearted service than change of status or a position, more presence of Christ in the roles we fulfill, and remembering the daily testimony of our lives and the call to faithfulness.

God has always been saying to the church, “Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). When we saturate ourselves in scripture, prayer, and mentoring relationships, we will hear God’s direction through the compassion of Christ and the power of the Spirit.

Sioux Falls Seminary Breakfast

Join President Greg Henson for breakfast and fellowship as he shares Sioux Falls Seminary’s passion for developing servants for participation in the Kingdom mission and how God has made it possible for theological education to be re-envisioned, becoming truly affordable, accessible, relevant, and faithful.

Shaped To register for Triennial visit: nabconference.org/triennial

2100 S. Summit Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD 57105
info@sfseminary.edu (800) 440-6227 www.sfseminary.edu @SFSeminary
Formation Resources

Dwell
by Barry Jones
One of the speakers for Triennial 2018, Barry Jones uses the example of Christ making His dwelling among us as the basis for how we should live as His followers. He details what it looks like to live like the incarnate Christ, missionally engaging the world around us out of a deep dependence on God.

Practices of Love
by Kyle David Bennett
Kyle David Bennett challenges us to practice spiritual disciplines not simply for ourselves but for the benefit of the world around us. He provides a renewed understanding of common spiritual disciplines and how they shape our everyday interactions by realigning the inner being of our hearts to the heart and practices of Jesus.

With
by Skye Jethani
Skye Jethani easily illustrates how many Christians are so focused on living a life for, under, over, or from God that they never truly experience life with God. Following his clear explanation of the problem, he outlines how to redirect our focus from God as a means to an end to seeking God for His sake alone.

The Great Omission
by Dallas Willard
In his typical fashion, Dallas Willard presses the church and followers of the Way to seek after Jesus from the innermost depths of who we are. Focusing on Jesus’s last command to make disciples, Willard gently, yet firmly, directs us to follow through on that call rather than take the easier road of simply making more Christians.

The Gift of Being Yourself
by David G. Benner
David G. Benner leads us on a journey of self-discovery that allows us to understand ourselves more deeply and more truly. He teaches us how to live in truth and leave behind the false identities we’ve all clung to, which allows us to gain a greater understanding of who God created us to be.

Renovation of the Church
by Kent Carlson & Mike Lueken
The story of the transformation of Oak Hills from a seeker-friendly church to a place where followers of Christ experience the transforming power of the Spirit of God and share that with the world is not a blueprint for success, but it provides guiding principles for designing church with worship in mind rather than consumerism.
Ten years ago, the Lord prompted me to get involved in a street ministry located near one of our congregations in Vancouver. I would drive through this part of town, notorious for crime, drug use, and homelessness, and become excited to participate with a group of people caring for the practical, emotional, and spiritual needs of those living on the streets. I thought I would help them get their lives sorted out and fix their problems. Little did I know that through my experiences with my “street friends,” the Lord was going to bring transformation to my own life.

As I observed life among this community, I was struck by the authenticity in their relationships. There was an unspoken knowledge of one another’s brokenness and pain. There was no pretense, and no judgment. They cried together over broken relationships, alienated children, and poor choices in life and had a willingness to confess their own addictions and struggles. One young lady poured her heart out to me over her choice to become a street worker and the devastation it had caused. As I stepped back and examined my own life, I questioned whether I gave the impression that my life is well ordered and neatly packaged. Like my street friends, was I willing to share with my Church community my deepest pain and sin, or only to risk revealing those things that were less offensive and more “acceptable” so I might be seen in a better light?

In conversations, I was amazed at their familiarity with the story of Jesus. They knew about forgiveness and repentance; they quoted Scriptures and willingly accepted prayer. They were convinced that even if society did not accept them, Jesus did. Amidst overdoses and death, some yet found their hope in Christ. They had nothing else.

I thought that I would be taking Jesus to these people, but the reality was that He was already there among them and used them to teach me more than I could ever have imagined.
was a messy faith for sure, as they realized that their lives may not go on much longer. They challenged me with the question of where I put my trust. Did I solely trust and hope in Him, or in what the world offers—money, position, and reputation?

On countless occasions, I witnessed a spirit of generosity pervading the people. Sandwiches and drinks were shared, and where there was a need, others were eager to step in and help. One evening, I gave a lady a coat from my car, for she was clearly cold. The following week, a street friend came to me and gave me a tennis racket, saying, “I saw you give the lady a coat last week and wanted to thank you for what you do here. Knowing you are a tennis player, I got this racket for you.” Wow. This caused me to examine my generosity toward others. Did I give only out of excess, or was I willing to forgo luxuries for the sake of another?

Over the years, those I’ve met have not been interested in theology or Christian opinions or the Church “fixing” their problems. They have wanted someone to be present with them. They have wanted to be listened to and cared for so they know they are not invisible. One gentleman started drinking after the death of his wife in order to deal with his grief. He drank himself to death. Would there have been a different outcome had someone sat with him through his pain and just been present? Maybe. How many times have I missed the opportunity to build relationships due to my preoccupation with accomplishing tasks, crossing things off my to do list, and seeing people as projects rather than being present and befriending them. I need to reassess how I relate to people.

Authenticity and vulnerability with one another, trusting in God alone, generosity, and taking the time to build relationships are but a few invaluable lessons the Lord has taught me, and in doing so is continuing to transform my life.

Having played professional tennis and then raised four children, Shelley is now enjoying a new season of increased ministry in her local church with those who are less fortunate and are living on the street. She continues to believe that the next season ahead will provide even more opportunity to work with her husband (NAB’s VP of Missional Initiatives, Cam Roxburgh) and others in the local church as they seek to partner with Christ and His Kingdom.
Quite a few years ago, my parents bought new bedroom furniture and were kind enough to give us their old solid wood set. The furniture was meant to tide us over until we could save up and afford a new bedroom set. Unfortunately, other unexpected expenses came our way, and a new set never materialized. Recently, I was looking at the furniture and was admiring it and thinking, people would pay good money for this. It’s hard to find furniture built like this today. Plus, all the nicks, dents, and scratches on the furniture tell a story.

A few times a year I notice families purging their house and garage with unwanted items – out with the old and in with the new. I have seen Salvation Army or Goodwill drop boxes, annual neighborhood cleanups, and even “Dumpster in a Bag” overflowing with discarded items. The more convenient it is to get rid of our “junk,” the better.

We live in an age where things don’t last very long. Yes, some of it does have to do with the fact that things aren’t built to last; but more often than not, it is because we have been trained to want new and improved things. Nowadays, people even discard their spouse the moment they are “just not feeling it anymore” and are ready for something new.

I have a friend who is redoing their kitchen, not because it is worn out, but just because they want something new. In fact, they offered friends the opportunity to pillage their kitchen for anything they want. This included dishes, appliances, you name it. They even asked if someone wanted their grand piano (perfect condition). Although, I’m not sure how that fits into their kitchen project.

This mentality appears to have grown worse and worse over the years. Rather than taking that old desk, refinishing it, and falling in love with it all over again, we find it easier to throw it out and buy a new one. Maybe we feel it is compensation for living with less when we were a child – or so we felt; or maybe we grew up with a little more than most and we have become accustomed to having much. Whatever the case, from the time we were young, we were being shaped financially by those around us.

Our parents likely had one of the biggest influences on us. After all, seeing is doing. If we are surrounded by people that not only live modestly, but also teach us the importance of it (something often missed), then likely we have a better chance to live well within our means. Does it mean there is little hope? No, but it is harder. Nearly everyone has attempted to break a bad habit at some time or another – whether it is smoking, drinking, overeating, unhealthy eating, coffee, drugs, etc. Whatever it is, we understand how hard it is to break a bad habit. Money is no different. In fact, it is probably harder because we are constantly bombarded with messages telling us what we have isn’t enough.

Amazon has been growing, and growing. Do you know why? It’s because they have made it easier and easier to buy things we probably don’t really need. In fact, we can even get free shipping on the stuff we don’t need. They have made

>>continued on next page>>
Church Investors Fund

it convenient for us to dispose of our money. We don’t even need to leave the comfort of our own couch.

Holidays are another big way to separate us from our money. In fact, it works so well that they started making a “holiday” for everything. I believe the only reason to create national donut day, or national pie day, is to separate us from our money. It’s not like the donut itself cares. Rather, it’s the donut shops that gain. Yes, it is good that they get added business those days, but it also means we have spent money where we normally wouldn’t have spent.

So how do we get out from under this spell we are under? As simple as it sounds, we first need to turn to God’s Word. We may not always like what the Bible has to say, but if we humble ourselves and take His Word as truth, then we can begin moving forward.

“But the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.” (Mark 4:19 NIV)

Living simply helps us disengage from the stronghold of worldly possessions that only distract us and turn our focus away from God. We need to be focused on the giving of ourselves and the resources God has provided to further His Kingdom.

Next, we need to determine where the money is REALLY going. The truth is, most don’t know, or realize, where the money goes week in and week out. We feel we are being frugal, but the money just doesn’t stretch as far as we expect. The most effective way to find out is to simply track it. Obtain a spending form and track your spending for a few months. Track every little expense, because believe me, it adds up. Did we stop at Starbucks for our morning coffee? Were we out and about all day and decided to just grab a quick bite? How about gas for the car? How about that appointment with the hairstylist, or the manicurist?

Social spending can be a killer as well. It’s hard to say no to the Girl Scout selling Thin Mints (my favorite). Even hanging out with friends can be challenging. Whatever happened to simply hanging out with friends and sharing whatever we happen to have in the cupboard? Today it seems we must bring flowers, dessert, or some little gift as a sign of gratitude for the invitation. What about friendship serving as the greatest gift of all. Having friends should be a blessing, not a burden on our pocketbook.

“I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.” (Philippians 4:12–13)

The sooner we determine and accept our reality, the better off we will be in the future. Then, once we understand our reality, we can move forward with proper money management. There are quite a few biblically based, money management courses available to us today. They are all a little different, but the principles are similar. In the beginning, the best thing we can do is to keep it simple.

Finally, as we gain control of your finances, we will feel a sense of freedom wash over us. It is then that we will begin to understand how much God has blessed us and how he has called us to use the resources he has entrusted to us.

“Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’” (Hebrews 13:5)
Q: Would you tell us about your family?

LB: The Lord blessed my wife, Sharon, and me with four children, and they arrived in this order: boy, girl, boy, girl. Our four children are all married and live in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and Florida. We have nine grandchildren: six boys and three girls, and the boys include triplets. We love visiting our children and grandchildren or having them home with us in Pennsylvania.

Q: What led you to becoming a pastor/serving in ministry?

LB: I wanted to be a lawyer. Perry Mason was my role model when I was in high school; but through the death of a sixteen-year-old boy in the small town in Pennsylvania where I grew up, God got my attention and called me into the ministry. My heart was broken by the thought that this young boy may not have been ready to meet the Lord. As a result of his sudden death, God gave me a great desire to share the good news of the gospel with as many people as possible.

Q: What is your life verse?

LB: Since I was a freshman at Houghton College in Houghton, New York, in 1966, my life verse has been John 14:21, “Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves Me. He who loves Me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.” I have discovered that if I will love the Lord Jesus Christ above all others and obey Him then He will manifest or show Himself to me and be real in my life.

Q: What energizes you?

LB: Spending time with God in His Word and prayer, preaching His Word, and watching God work in the lives of people. I decided many years ago that there were two eternal things that I wanted to give myself to: the Word of God and the souls of people.

Q: Why or how did God lead you to serve as Regional Minister (or what led you)?

LB: In 2009 our NAB Executive Director met with a number of our Atlantic Association pastors in Bensalem, Pennsylvania. He challenged us by saying, “Our next Regional Minister should come from our group of pastors.” I had many reasons why that should not be me, but our Atlantic Association Moderator, Pastor Sam Slaffey, asked me to pray about it and before long the Lord put it in my heart that this was what He wanted me to do. I am now in my eighth year as our Atlantic Association RM and I love ministering to our pastors and helping them and their churches in any way I possibly can.

Q: What is the most challenging part of serving in ministry?

LB: As our culture is becoming more secular and is in a moral free fall, remaining faithful to the Lord and His Word is my greatest challenge. 1 Thessalonians 5:24 gives me great hope for the future: “The One who calls you is faithful and He will do it.” I must trust the Lord daily to work in me and through me for His glory. Psalm 115:1

Q: What do you most enjoy about serving as Regional Minister?

LB: I enjoy meeting one on one with the pastors of the Atlantic Association and hearing their joys and trials and praying with them and seeking to encourage them in their ministry.

Q: How can we pray for you?

LB: Please pray that the Lord will help me to be HPC (Humble, Pure and Committed) to Him and His will for my life.

Living H2O

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.” (Philippians 4:8)
Triennial Scholarship

Church Investors Fund is pleased to offer scholarships for the 2018 Triennial Conference being held in July 2018 in Edmonton, Alberta. Our aim with these scholarships is to help pastors from smaller churches, who are ministry partners with Church Investors Fund and who wish to attend the 2018 NAB Triennial Conference, relieve a portion of the financial strain that might otherwise hold them back from attending.

The Scholarship

Covers the cost of Early Bird Registration ($309 CAD/$269 USD) for ONE pastor or representative of a qualified church.

Who Qualifies

Pastors of a church where the church has a minimum of $25,000 in loans or investments with Church Investors Fund.

How the Scholarship Works

Visit the NAB Conference website at nabconference.org/triennial, and click on the scholarship link.

Once complete, Church Investors Fund will review your request and contact you via email.

If awarded, Church Investors Fund will provide a scholarship code that can be used when registering for Triennial.

If you request a scholarship, be sure to wait to hear back from Church Investors Fund before registering for Triennial.

I am known for making “Sven and Ole” stories part of my NAB Conference financial report presentations. When I was 70 years old, I graduated from Bethel Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, with a Master of Theological Studies degree.

I proposed the concept of Church Investors Fund and got it up and running.

Do you think you know who I am? Find out by visiting www.CeIF.org, email (epond@cifinc.org) or call Ellie Pond at 800-543-2343, ext 233.
Lehotsky Lazarus Award Contest

The Lehotsky Lazarus award was formed to honor those who demonstrate a commitment to transforming lives within their community. Our mission is to give back to those who have given much. We hope to encourage them to continue serving God, despite the many challenges they face. Our hope is this inspires others who are called by God to reach out to their community. Most importantly, our aim is to glorify God and inform people of the wonderful work being done to further His Kingdom.

We are looking for someone who is active in creating a God-honoring impact in their community, someone who is passionate in what they do and inspires others. We are looking for someone who recognizes a need or a problem in their community and takes action to meet that need.

The winner will be presented an award at the 2018 NAB Triennial Conference in Edmonton, Alberta, in July.

We really look forward to hearing how God is moving in your church and the surrounding community.

RULES:
(1) Entry can be submitted in form of Video (3–5 minutes*); or
(2) Essay with photos (2 page maximum*) - *Suggested lengths
(3) Deadline for submissions: March 31, 2018
(4) Please, no entries from an immediate family member of the person being nominated (ie. mom, dad, son, daughter, etc.)
(5) The information must be “first hand” information, with no gain for applicant
(6) Submission must come from someone other than candidate.
(7) Applicant/Candidate does not need to have a loan or investment with Church Investors Fund
(8) Entries will be judged on the content, not necessarily the quality of the presentation
(9) An individual or group is welcome to submit an entry
(10) More than one entry per church is acceptable
(11) Ministry must be associated with a North American Baptist Church
(12) Winner must be present at Triennial
(13) Winner will be notified by June 1, 2018
(14) Entries will be judged by the Church Investors Fund Board of Directors & Officers
(15) Submit Entry to:
Church Investors Fund
9401 E Stockton Blvd., Suite 240
Elk Grove, CA 95624
bglim@cifinc.org
1-800-543-2343

★★★★★ Rates ★★★★★

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>US TERM CERTIFICATES*</th>
<th>5 YEAR</th>
<th>$1,000+</th>
<th>$5,000+</th>
<th>$50,000+</th>
<th>$100,000+</th>
<th>$250,000+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.00%</td>
<td>2.25%</td>
<td>2.50%</td>
<td>2.75%</td>
<td>3.00%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CANADA TERM BONDS*</th>
<th>5 YEAR</th>
<th>$1,000+</th>
<th>$5,000+</th>
<th>$50,000+</th>
<th>$100,000+</th>
<th>$250,000+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.50%</td>
<td>2.75%</td>
<td>3.00%</td>
<td>3.25%</td>
<td>3.50%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Rates good through November 30, 2017, and subject to change without notice.

Church Investors Fund’s mission is to assist local churches with facilities development - helping them respond to God’s call to make disciples.
In our culture, being average is not good enough. On the one hand, this has produced individuals who push themselves, who try new things and produce new ideas. On the other hand, it means that individuals are often not satisfied with “merely” being consistent and reliable. If your contributions do not stand out, you have not made a “real” difference.

Some of this drive comes from what I would call a hyper-individual focus. Have you ever felt that pull to stand out from the crowd? To be recognized as someone who has made a difference? I certainly have. As Kent Carlson’s article indicates, cultural forces are powerful, and they are not value-neutral. Followers of Jesus need to become aware of our cultural motivations and—when necessary—strive to reorient or (re)shape our lives around the teachings of Jesus.

The work of White Cross has largely been built by those whose lives are modeled on Jesus’s teachings—those who have given of themselves regardless of whether their work is recognized.

I am reminded of the parable of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25:31–46. For the sake of brevity, let me paraphrase one of the key verses, which, in answer to the question, “When did we help you?” states, “Just as you helped a seemingly insignificant individual, you helped me.” This passage reminds us that every contribution for good is valued by God. It also reminds us that we are all in this together. Each reference to “you” in the verse is plural, not singular. It is not (just) about what any one individual has accomplished; it is about what we have accomplished together.

Paul’s body metaphor also offers some good insights: We are a single body made up of many parts—each part contributing. The work of everyone involved in White Cross—in Canada, the US, and Cameroon—matters. We need to continue to model and teach the value of working together.

If we continue to work together—using the individual gifts that God has given, regardless of whether we ever feel like we stand out—we should not be surprised when God gathers us together and says, “Blessed are you because you helped to save and transform many lives.” You might even feel like saying, “When did I save a life?” You have no idea. And that’s okay.

For more information about the work of White Cross in Canada and the United States, visit:

Canada: www.taylor-edu.ca/wahlcentre/whitecross

United States: www.nabconference.org/white-cross

White Cross Open House

I look forward to greeting many of you at the White Cross Open House at Triennial. You will have a chance to meet new friends, reconnect with old friends, hear the latest from Cameroon, ask questions, tour the facilities, and enjoy some refreshments. More details will follow.

Shaped

To register for Triennial visit: nabconference.org/triennial
5 Pray for Shan Reed’s time with family and friends as she settles into her first month on home assignment. Pray for rest in the midst of connecting with churches and donors.

6 Keep the church planting strategy meetings with NAB’s church planting network partner, C2C, in Quebec in prayer as they take place over the next three days. C2C works with the NAB to assess prospective church planters.

7 Pray for God to grant your local elected officials wisdom. Ask God to guide you how to partner with them as you follow His leading in reaching your community for the Gospel.

8 Pray for the ongoing political unrest in Cameroon. Ask God to bring both sides of the conflict together for a peaceful resolution.

9 Pray for Chain of Love in Brazil as they care for children and adolescents who have been removed from their families due to situations of physical, social, or emotional vulnerability.

10 Pray for Randy Jaspers, who began serving as the new RM for the Northern Plains Region on November 1. Pray for a smooth transition, and ask God to give him wisdom as he serves the pastors and churches in the Northern Plains.

11 Pray for our NAB missionaries who are on home assignment right now. Pray that they would have great connections with their supporters, as well as encouraging times of rest and spending time with friends and family.

12 Pray for the Cameroon Baptist Seminary in Kumba, which is working to complete additional classrooms to provide more space for learning.

13 Pray for regional ministers Dr. James Renke (Upper Mississippi Region), Pastor Larry Burd (Atlantic Association), and Dr. David Ewing (Eastern Association). Ask God to continue to give them wisdom as they serve the pastors and churches in their area.

14 Pray for regional ministers Rev. Dan Heringer (Central Plains Region), Rev. Terry Holley (Great Lakes Association), and Dr. Bob Krahm (British Columbia Association). Ask God to continue to give them wisdom as they serve the pastors and churches in their area.

15 Pray for regional ministers Pastor Ken Solberg (Saskatchewan Baptist Association), Rev. Rick Weber (Northern California Association), and Rev. Bob Klein (Southern California Association). Ask God to continue to give them wisdom as they serve the pastors and churches in their area.

16 Pray for Gary Clatterbuck as he works with Moscow Theological Seminary. Pray for safety and for the provision of teachers.

17 For her birthday, pray for NAB missionary Lyndell Campbell Réquia’s work at the seminary in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, as she trains pastors for ministry.

18 Pray for the fund-raising efforts on this Giving Tuesday as we seek to provide 2018 Triennial scholarships for emerging leaders in the NAB.

19 Early bird registration for Triennial opens today. Pray for the continued planning and preparation for this NAB family gathering July 26–29 of next year.

20 For her birthday, pray for NAB missionary Lyndell Campbell Réquia’s work at the seminary in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, as she trains pastors for ministry.

21 Pray for the Cameroon Baptist Seminary in Kumba, which is working to complete additional classrooms to provide more space for learning.

22 Pray for regional ministers Pastor Ken Solberg (Saskatchewan Baptist Association), Rev. Rick Weber (Northern California Association), and Rev. Bob Klein (Southern California Association). Ask God to continue to give them wisdom as they serve the pastors and churches in their area.

23 Pray for the continued planning and preparation for this NAB family gathering July 26–29 of next year.

24 For her birthday, pray for NAB missionary Lyndell Campbell Réquia’s work at the seminary in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, as she trains pastors for ministry.

25 Pray for the fund-raising efforts on this Giving Tuesday as we seek to provide 2018 Triennial scholarships for emerging leaders in the NAB.

26 Pray for Regional Ministers Dr. James Renke (Upper Mississippi Region), Pastor Larry Burd (Atlantic Association), and Dr. David Ewing (Eastern Association). Ask God to continue to give them wisdom as they serve the pastors and churches in their area.

27 Pray for regional ministers Rev. Dan Heringer (Central Plains Region), Rev. Terry Holley (Great Lakes Association), and Dr. Bob Krahm (British Columbia Association). Ask God to continue to give them wisdom as they serve the pastors and churches in their area.

28 Pray for regional ministers Pastor Ken Solberg (Saskatchewan Baptist Association), Rev. Rick Weber (Northern California Association), and Rev. Bob Klein (Southern California Association). Ask God to continue to give them wisdom as they serve the pastors and churches in their area.

29 Pray for Gary Clatterbuck as he works with Moscow Theological Seminary. Pray for safety and for the provision of teachers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
<th>SATURDAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 Dennis and Nancy Palmer, NAB missionaries to Cameroon, will be visiting the International Office today. Pray for their remaining month on home assignment, as well as the transition to back on the field.</td>
<td>3 Pray for the Taylor Seminary board meetings today and tomorrow. Pray that the meetings would be a time where the Holy Spirit is at work.</td>
<td>4 Lift up the Great Plains Association Annual Meeting in Emery, SD. As the second day wraps up, ask God to make His presence known among the pastors and leaders present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Thank God for the freedom to worship freely, and pray for the believers in other countries who do not have that privilege.</td>
<td>10 Pray for the Banff Pastor and Spouse’s Retreat as leaders from the Alberta Baptist Association gather to reconnect, rest, worship, and enjoy God’s presence together.</td>
<td>11 On this Armistice Day, remembering the official end of WWI, pray over the many conflicts, large and small, that still trouble our world today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Pray for Elevate, a small two-and-a-half-day gathering of young church leaders in NorCal discussing leading and ministering in today’s world.</td>
<td>17 Since today is International Students’ Day, pray for Bud Fuchs as he partners with churches and campus ministries in Utah to reach international students for Christ.</td>
<td>18 As the Village Creek Bible Camp board meets today, lift up the leadership for all of the NAB camps who are beginning to plan for next summer’s events and camps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 In honor of US Thanksgiving, take time to thank God for the individuals He has placed in your life to help you grow and mature in your faith.</td>
<td>24 Pray for those individuals within the NAB working with native peoples in the US and Canada. Ask God to tear down the walls of hostility and miscommunication and bring His shalom.</td>
<td>25 Pray for regional ministers Dr. Jim Leverette and associate Dr. Terry Fossen (Alberta Baptist Association) and regional minister Rev. Chris Gorman (Northwest Region). Ask God to continue to give them wisdom as they serve the pastors and churches in their area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Go through each of the ministries of your church and pray for them by name, asking God to use them for His Kingdom.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Missional Engagement**

**International Missions**

**Leadership Formation**

**Ethnic Partnership**
### Missional Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Prayer Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>As we enter the season of Advent, looking toward the celebration of Christ’s arrival on earth, ask God how you can live incarnationally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pray for a greater depth of understanding and love today in your own life for the call of God to join Him on mission in your neighborhood and city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pray for the assessment meetings in Toronto, ON, between prospective NAB church planters and C2C, NAB’s church planting network partner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Tamas and Tunde Modi are national missionaries in Romania who are working with the Gerickes and Wagners to help establish Camp Falcon Rock. Lift up their ministry in prayer today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Pray for NAB partners, the Japan Baptist Conference, the Cameroon Baptist Convention, and the Hungarian Baptist Convention of Romania.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Lift up Calvin and Susanne Hohn in prayer. Ask God to bless Susanne on her birthday, and intercede on Calvin’s behalf as he serves as field director for the NAB in Cameroon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Lift up to God the next generation of leaders in your church. Pray for their growth as men and women of God and as servants of Christ filled with the Holy Spirit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Pray for NAB missionaries Paul and Tanya Gericke as they celebrate their wedding anniversary. Ask God to strengthen their faith and their marriage as they work with Camp Falcon Rock in Romania.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Pray for regional ministers Dr. Jim Leverette and associate Dr. Terry Fossen (Alberta Baptist Association) and regional minister Rev. Chris Gorman (Northwest Region). Ask God to continue to give them wisdom as they serve the pastors and churches in their area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Thank Jesus for making His home among us and showing us the way to the Kingdom of Heaven.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>As you celebrate today, say a prayer or two for those who, like Mary, Joseph, and Jesus, have no place to rest their head, that they might find someplace warm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Pray for the ministry leaders at your church, that God would grant them patience, endurance, and joy in their service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Thank God for all He has done this past year in your life, in your church, and in the NAB.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### International Missions

- Tamas and Tunde Modi are national missionaries in Romania who are working with the Gerickes and Wagners to help establish Camp Falcon Rock. Lift up their ministry in prayer today.

### Leadership Formation

### Ethnic Partnership

- Thank Jesus for making His home among us and showing us the way to the Kingdom of Heaven.

- Thank God for all He has done this past year in your life, in your church, and in the NAB.
**WEDNESDAY**

6 Pray over every house on your street, asking God with each one how He can use you to bless those who live there.

---

**THURSDAY**

7 Pray that the Alberta Baptist Association’s Retired and Semi-Retired Ministry Workers Gathering would be an excellent time of fellowship and worship.

---

**FRIDAY**

1 Pray for White Cross as they provide for direct and tangible participation in the compassionate care ministry of the North American Baptist Conference.

---

**SATURDAY**

2 Pray for the regional ministers and search committees who are in the process of searching for new pastors for NAB churches. Pray for God’s wisdom and guidance as they seek to fill these open positions.

---

**SUNDAY**

13 Pray for Gateway, specifically for Director Randy Schmor and the important work he does training churches and missions teams for missional engagement through long-term partnerships with mission fields around the world.

---

14 Pray for each of the fields around the world where the NAB has missionaries and ministry partners at work: Brazil, Cameroon, East Asia, Hungary, Japan, the Philippines, Romania, Russia, and Serbia.

---

15 Pray for the Jones family, new NAB missionaries, who are raising funds to join Lyndell Campbell-Réquia in Brazil, training ministers of the Gospel through theological education.

---

16 Thank God for Geoff Hartt and his work leading Hispanics for Christ. Pray that God continues to use this ministry to encourage Hispanic pastors and establish ministry hubs in underserved areas.

---

19 Pray for regional ministers Pastor Ken Solberg (Saskatchewan Baptist Association) and Rev. Bob Klein (Southern California Association). Ask God to continue to give them wisdom as they serve the pastors and churches in their area.

---

20 Pray for regional ministers Rev. Dan Heringer (Central Plains Region), Rev. Terry Holley (Great Lakes Association), and Dr. Bob Krahm (British Columbia Association). Ask God to continue to give them wisdom as they serve the pastors and churches in their area.

---

21 Pray for regional ministers Dr. Randy Jaspers (Northern Plains Region) and Dr. David Ewing (Eastern Association). Ask God to continue to give them wisdom as they serve the pastors and churches in their area.

---

22 Pray for regional ministers Dr. James Renke (Upper Mississippi Region), Pastor Larry Burd (Atlantic Association), and Rev. Rick Weber (Northern California Association). Ask God to continue to give them wisdom as they serve the pastors and churches in their area.

---

23 Pray for regional ministers Rev. Dan Heringer (Central Plains Region), Rev. Terry Holley (Great Lakes Association), and Dr. Bob Krahm (British Columbia Association). Ask God to continue to give them wisdom as they serve the pastors and churches in their area.

---

24 Pray for regional ministers Pastor Ken Solberg (Saskatchewan Baptist Association) and Rev. Bob Klein (Southern California Association). Ask God to continue to give them wisdom as they serve the pastors and churches in their area.

---

25 Pray for regional ministers Rev. Dan Heringer (Central Plains Region), Rev. Terry Holley (Great Lakes Association), and Dr. Bob Krahm (British Columbia Association). Ask God to continue to give them wisdom as they serve the pastors and churches in their area.

---

26 Pray for regional ministers Dr. Randy Jaspers (Northern Plains Region) and Dr. David Ewing (Eastern Association). Ask God to continue to give them wisdom as they serve the pastors and churches in their area.

---

27 Pray for those who visited your church for Christmas services without truly understanding the purpose for the holiday. Ask God to open their hearts.

---

28 Lift up NAB missionary Yuri Nakano to the Lord for her birthday. Pray for her work at Kongo Bible Church in Osaka, Japan, where she teaches and trains leaders.

---

29 Pray for Laci and Eszter Daróczi-Csuhai, national missionaries in Hungary who work with Community Health Evangelism to preach the Gospel in the midst of providing for tangible needs.

---

30 Lift NAB missionaries Rick and Debbie Bardin in prayer as they make preparations to return to Cameroon after spending the last few months on home assignment reacquainting with supporters and meeting their new grandchild.
The North American Baptist Conference is encouraging you to give on #GivingTuesday to our “Emerging NAB Leaders” opportunity to help send younger NAB leaders to Triennial 2018.