

ONWARD

NEWS, VIEWS & PRAYER FROM THE NORTH AMERICAN BAPTIST FAMILY

International Missions

Sending and supporting international missionaries is an important discipline of the Church. And for us as a conference of churches, it's who we've been, who we should be, and who we are becoming.

INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS



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For the past ten years, Norm Poehlke has served as our key conference leader in the area of international missions. He has led faithfully and constructively in this growing post-Christian era. Though Norm ended his service on May 31, 2018, we asked him to write the forward article of this edition of Onward. Blessings on Norm and Melissa Poehlke as they transition back to pastoral ministry in the local church.

—Dan Hamil

The speed of change seems to outpace our ability to adapt. It seems that in every aspect of our lives, the pace of change is increasing. This is true in technology, morality, global politics, and even in international missions. The pace of change is not something that we can control, but we can control how we adapt to change.

John Kotter has said, “We know that leadership is very much related to change. As the pace of change accelerates, there is naturally a greater need for effective leadership.” As I look back over these past ten years, there have been three changes that I have sought to bring to NAB international missions so that we might alter the way we view and participate in God’s global work.

The first thing was to decentralize our understanding of international missions as being the work of the International Office to instead being the work of the local church. It used to be true that our definition of NAB missions was limited to the missionaries who were sent and supported through the International Office. Although the sending work of the International Office is important and should expand, international missions belongs first and foremost to the local church. Every missionary you send from your church is an NAB missionary. They may not serve with the NAB, but “we are all NAB.”

We have restructured ourselves to support the sending of all NAB missionaries, including the sending of missionaries from your local church, regardless of with whom they serve. Our desire is that every missionary and team sent from an NAB church is prepared, sent, and supported with excellence.

Second, we have strategically stepped into the world of supporting national missionaries. We now have six national missionaries who are native to their country of service. We have found the legal pathways required to walk through these doors, and we have invited NAB churches to enter into these ministries. One of the articles you will read in this edition of *Onward* is

from our national missionary in Serbia.

Third, we have invested considerable time and energy into the development of true international partnerships, and that means we enter a two-way street where both partners contribute and serve each other. I have learned so much about the empowering of the Holy Spirit from national pastors who have minimal theological training yet witness the coming of the Kingdom of God. I wish every NAB church could benefit from a partnership with a pastor like this.

We as NAB churches have much to bring to the global work of missions, but the global church has much to teach us in North America, too. Long-term partnerships are an investment in our own church as much as they are an investment in international missions.

So the table is set. We have spent the past ten years adapting to the changing world of international missions, and now we are ready to dive in with both feet. Today is the day for more. More NAB missionaries, more kinds of NAB missionaries, more NAB churches supporting NAB missionaries, and more partnerships where we are both the senders and receivers of international missionaries. It has been my privilege to serve the NAB in a season of tremendous change, and I trust, by God’s grace, that we have set the foundation for a new era of NAB international missions.

In this edition of *Onward*, you will get a taste for the changes we have initiated and the new ways you can participate in God’s global work.



Norm Poehlke

Norm Poehlke
Former Vice President
of Ministry Outreach
North American Baptist Conference

Equipping Leaders in Brazil



Brandon Jones

Missionary to Brazil
North American Baptist Conference

The mission of the Baptist Theological Seminary of Rio Grande do Sul in Porto Alegre, Brazil, sounds so simple: equipping southern Brazil's future church planters and leaders, helping churches develop their lay leaders, and enriching seasoned pastors with continuing education. However, carrying out this threefold mission requires a lot of moving parts, which I saw firsthand when I went there to teach a two-week intensive class on Old Testament theology.

My first evening in Porto Alegre, my wife and I hit the ground running. Our flight arrived on a Monday afternoon. At the baggage claim, we first met Paulo Réquia and Lyndell Campbell-Réquia. Paulo, a native of Porto Alegre, was our driver throughout our two-week stay. As a graduate of the seminary, he serves as a pastor in the area and is a national missionary with Teach Beyond. Lyndell, the seminary's only full-time faculty member, was our host and interpreter for our stay. After weaving through heavy traffic up and down hills and through several curves, we checked into our hotel on a busy street named after Christopher Columbus.

This street, like much of the city around it, boasts several high-rise apartments with hundreds of shops lining both sides as far as you can see. Pedestrians fill the sidewalks each morning and evening as buses, cars, and taxis clog the street itself. Down this same street, not far from our hotel, lies the building for the seminary, which has trained church planters and leaders for nearly forty years.

The seminary shares a building with a Baptist-run school that holds preschool to high school classes by day, so seminary classes begin at 7:00 p.m. As teachers and seminary students enter the building each night, the building is still buzzing with dance classes, indoor soccer practices, and kids sprawled all over the entrance waiting for parents to pick them up. As time for my first class approached on that Monday, seminary students of all ages came in one by one.

The seminary's mission begins with God and His Church. As He calls people to plant churches, pastor churches, and help lead churches all over the state of Rio Grande do Sul, they come to Porto Alegre to train. Some come by bus, some drive, and others even walk to class.

Evening classes suit the students well as most of them work during the day. Each semester they will be in class from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. four nights a week, with Wednesdays off so they can be with their church families.

For two and a half years, the students will receive an all-around course of study to prepare them for ministry, including classes in Bible, theology, church history, and practical ministry. Using an online conferencing program, students who cannot make it to

Porto Alegre can login to classes, where they can listen to the lectures, participate in group discussions, and exchange questions and answers with the teachers.

Behind the scenes, the seminary has a dedicated staff of one administrator, Sandra, who handles correspondence and finance, and a registrar, Marcos, who also looks after all technology to ensure that online students and teachers are brought together. I met with them each evening before my classes. They're full of joy and love for the people God continually brings to the seminary.

At the heart of the seminary is Lyndell, a career NAB missionary. She has served as a teacher at the seminary for over fifteen years. When she's not teaching her own classes, she interprets for visiting English-speaking

professors like me. She also works with the seminary's administrators to shape the overall course of study and recruit teachers for each class.

On top of the regular course of study to train future leaders, the seminary is pleased to come alongside Brazilian Baptist churches in the southern portion of the country and provide sessions for developing lay leaders with intensive weekend sessions right where the church members are. The seminary also provides continuing education opportunities for alumni and other current pastors through sessions on relevant topics.

Among the many moving parts needed to carry out the seminary's mission, the most difficult piece has been securing high-quality teachers for each class. Most

students can barely afford to pay a modest tuition fee plus the cost of textbooks, so the seminary cannot pay for their own professors through tuition money. Lyndell remains the only full-time faculty member at the seminary, and it can be a challenge to find qualified teachers who are available to teach students during each weeknight on top of their full-time calling as pastors across southern Brazil.

A few years ago, the president of the seminary saw this challenge and asked the NAB

to provide another full-time professor. God has been at work in answering this call by sending me and my family to join Lyndell and Paulo in Porto Alegre as soon as our fundraising is complete.

As we look to the future of the seminary, pray with us that God will continue to call people to serve His churches in Rio Grande do Sul. Pray that the seminary will continue to find faithful teachers who can equip the students well. Pray that the churches of southern Brazil will continue to develop their own leaders. And pray that we in the NAB may continue to encourage those who are currently serving God's churches, no matter where they are in the world. ■

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Ministry Partnership an Ocean Away



Paul Nather

Lead Pastor
Century Baptist Church, Bismarck, ND

Since 2007, the high school ministry of Century Baptist Church in Bismarck, North Dakota, has regularly traveled to Cameroon for summer mission trips. What began as a project-based opportunity has grown into a fruitful, strong partnership between Century Baptist Student Ministries, the youth ministry department of the Cameroon Baptist Convention, and North American Baptist student ministries.

In 2012, the Youth Ministry Leadership Team launched the Overflow Project with the desire to see student ministries from around the NAB help fund the building of a camp at Lake Oku, Cameroon. Since then, the Century Baptist students have been traveling to Oku to help renovate, remodel, and construct buildings needed to host over 2,500 youth for camps and retreats. What was at the beginning just an open plot of land containing only one small chapel now holds a number of rest houses, a kitchen, classrooms, and a 2,500-seat chapel. This came to pass only through the partnership, which encouraged the fundraising and was the motivation to continue the work of building this camp. The majority of the

finances raised and the work of the construction has come from the hearts and hands of the Cameroon Baptist Convention youth and youth department. The partnership has been a prayer support and a continued encouragement to see the dream fulfilled.

The goal of the partnership has never been a completed camp. The camp project has provided incredible opportunities for students and youth leaders to serve side by side with our brothers and sisters in Cameroon to encourage reaching more young people for the sake of the Gospel of Christ. While on the trips, Century students have not only focused on the project but also participated in numerous service opportunities, such as leading worship in churches, organizing Vacation Bible School events, visiting patients in hospitals, serving in HIV testing, and helping with hospitality details for national youth conferences. Teams have also had the opportunity to visit our NAB missionaries, bringing them encouragement and learning a lot about the rich history of the NAB in Africa.



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A Newsletter for the NAB Family

Although the individual projects have been impactful, it has been the relationships between the students from different continents and the encouragement that we all provide each other that has really deepened the partnership. With each trip we take, we grow closer and deeper with one another, allowing us to be encouraged in ministry and share the Gospel, together. These trips have resulted in some students being led to full-time missions and ministry.

Over the years, Cameroonian youth leaders have traveled across the Atlantic Ocean to spend time at Century Baptist and other NAB churches, as well as attend the youth workers' Summit and The Gathering. The model of a conference/service project like The Gathering has inspired youth conferences in Cameroon that mirror much of what takes place at The Gathering, with powerful results.

As NAB leadership continues to challenge churches to create partnerships around the world, Century Baptist is committed to deeper and closer connections to the student ministries of the Cameroon Baptist Convention. If you are a youth pastor, would you begin praying about where and how the Lord may use you and your students to serve? May the Lord lead a ministry in another nation to be praying the same thing, and may you find a deeper connection for the sake of the Gospel. ■

 www.nabconference.org/nabstudents/



Celebrating Dennis & Nancy Palmer

Dennis Palmer, NAB missionary to Cameroon, was recently honored with the privilege of giving the commemorative Stewart Lecture to all those attending the yearly Continuing Medical and Dental Education Conference. This lecture serves as a kind of recognition of a lifetime of service for the chosen Christian Medical & Dental Associations missionary physician. We, too, celebrate this recognition of the many years of service in the medical missions field in Cameroon and the significant impact Dennis and Nancy Palmer together have made in the lives of thousands. ■



“When God invites a son or daughter into missions, He also invites the parents.”

Cheryl Savageau and Diane Stortz

Connection in Japan



Jean Ewing
Women's Ministry Leadership Team

Joy Reed, Linda Hanes, and I are three moms whose children are missionaries in Japan. When God invited our children into international missions, it meant they would travel more and live farther from us than we ever expected, learn a language we didn't speak, eat foods strange to us, and miss holidays, birthdays, and family gatherings. However, we knew above all else our children were doing this because they loved God and because He asked them to do it. The difficulty for us was in accepting God's invitation for ourselves.

Although there are times when our mothers' hearts miss the hugs and conversation, we are grateful for other ways in which we can see our children's/grandchildren's smiles and hear their voices. Joy, Linda, and I have found comfort and great joy in accepting God's invitation to be a partner in Japan with our children, and we all agree that we feel blessed by doing so.

Shan Reed was a young girl when my husband and I moved our family to Madison, South Dakota, when David became pastor there. Shan and Paul soon became friends, played together, and, if I remember correctly, even got into trouble together. Joy, Shan's mother, was my good friend during those days. It was during this time that Paul and Shan met Lucille Wipf, a missionary to Japan with the North American Baptists, and an interest in missions was ignited. Shan later accepted the call to full-time work in Japan. Joy and Roger also accepted this invitation.

“I have always believed that missions is an important part of my life and our lives as Christians. My parents passed this love on to me, and I wanted my daughters to learn the same important truth. When Shan said she wanted to go to Japan as a missionary, I felt I could trust God with her even though I was a little scared. My trust in God has grown stronger over the years. When she said she wanted to go home to Japan, I knew God had worked in her heart and given her a love for Japan and the Japanese people.

“My husband and I have supported Shan prayerfully and financially. We have also traveled to Japan to see where she works and to meet her friends, which encouraged and comforted me. I could see that God had truly called her there, and the trip gave me a deeper understanding of the work there and how to pray for Shan and the other missionaries. The beauty and the people of Japan made sharing our daughter worthwhile.”
—Joy Reed

God also invited Linda Hanes into missions through her daughter, Melissa Kohl Ewing. Our journey in the pastorate led us to Getzville, New York, in 1989. Melissa, her sister, and her mom were members of Bethel Baptist Church. Melissa and I became friends through working on Vacation Bible School and other projects together. Paul's visits from college became more frequent, and soon this friend was to become my daughter-in-law. Melissa later accepted the invitation from God to be a part of the team in Japan. Her mom, Linda, soon embraced His invitation, too.

"My church had always supported missionaries. I got to hear about their ministry in other countries, but I never thought of my daughter becoming a missionary in a foreign country. I have to admit that it was very difficult watching my family board the plane in 2001 to follow what the Lord had directed them to do: share the Gospel of Jesus with the Japanese people. 'WOW,' I thought. 'Could I have done that?' I was so proud of Melissa traveling thousands of miles with two young children and her husband, relying on the Lord to protect them and take care of them in the days ahead. I am sure many thoughts were also going through her mind at the time regarding struggles she would face.

"I cannot express how proud I am of Melissa, of how she has learned the language; shared the Gospel with the Japanese people; taught English classes; had Elijah, now 13, in a foreign country; and watched her sons learn the Japanese language and culture."
—Linda Hanes

Paul Ewing was born in Rochester, New York, and was whisked away when he was two weeks old to live in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, during David's seminary days. His moves with us to Madison, South Dakota; Kansas City, Missouri; Bismarck, North Dakota; and Getzville, New York, made him aware of the call of God and saw the example of our accepting His invitation to be a part of His work. While at Crystal Springs Camp in North Dakota when he was in junior high, Paul felt that God was inviting him on his own journey. Although the pathway wasn't clear, he knew God wanted him on the mission field. His deep interest in medical missions made him think that this is where God wanted him. After that door closed, he went to Sioux Falls Seminary to pursue studies in cross-cultural ministries. By the time he graduated, the invitation from God was clear. He was inviting Paul to join the work He was doing in Japan.

David and I gladly accepted the invitation, too. We were excited that Paul felt a definite direction from God. Even though many miles would separate Paul and his family from us, we knew that God would provide for them as He had for us. We have traveled to Japan with Linda and three others from Bethel Baptist on two short-term mission trips and shared two other adventures in Japan. It is always a joy for us when that home assignment year brings them to Buffalo, New York. I know that not only will we get a lot of Japan Ewing time, but Paul's siblings from France, Virginia, and locally will all find a way to our home, and we can celebrate being a family in close proximity once again for a few days. ■



www.nabconference.org/nab-womens-ministry



Parents of Missionaries: How to Thrive and Stay Connected When Your Children and Grandchildren Serve Cross-Culturally

by Cheryl Savageau and Diane Stortz

Combining a counselor's professional insight, a parent's personal journey and ideas and stories from missionaries help parents realize that not only can you survive as a parent of a missionary—you can thrive.

International Missionaries: *It's Who We've Been*





The Impact of Serving Together



Greg Henson
President
Sioux Falls Seminary



David Williams
President
Taylor Seminary

As NAB seminaries in North America, we are finding new ways to serve in international missions as we discover new and better opportunities to serve alongside our sister seminaries in Cameroon.

When thinking about seminaries, people often only think about academic programs and not the systems, processes, and educational philosophies that undergird them. In order for seminaries to be good partners in the missional work of the church, these systems, processes, and philosophies often need to be redeveloped. Seminaries around the world are at a crossroads: either change their relationships with local churches or become irrelevant. In 2015, leaders from the NAB Conference, Taylor Seminary, Sioux Falls Seminary, the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC), Cameroon Baptist Theological Seminary, and Cameroon Baptist Seminary Kumba discussed this reality. These conversations led to a new way of conceptualizing and implementing global partnerships focused on the flow of theological education from the local church.

Each partner took seriously the reality that all members have an equal amount of wisdom to share. Now, three years later, everyone involved has been strengthened by their participation. We have all made strong progress, particularly in four key areas.

Faculty Development

North American faculty work with a growing number of students from diverse backgrounds and cultures, and the faculty at Sioux Falls and Taylor understand the need to develop cross-cultural teaching skills. In Cameroon, the faculty face an overwhelming teaching load and need to invest in their credentials to meet accreditation requirements. In response, all four of the seminaries created a means for North American faculty to gain teaching experience in cross-cultural contexts while, simultaneously, the Cameroonian faculty receive training. Over thirty faculty have already participated in this initiative.

Innovation

Innovation must be informed by a local context. What works well for one seminary may not work well for another. Context is an even greater issue when thinking about global innovation. However, key concepts are often transferrable. With the CBC, two principles have been mutually beneficial.

First, the concept of non-geographically bound collaboration has been important in both Cameroon and North America. The seminaries in Cameroon are

physically and culturally separated, with unique programs, constituencies, and learning opportunities, yet they are learning to function together in a more integrated and intentional way. The same is true for Sioux Falls and Taylor.

Second, helping students remain in context has been important. In both Cameroon and North America, fewer students want to disconnect from their ministry contexts in order to pursue theological education. As a result, we are all thinking differently about meeting students where they are. In Cameroon, it is taking shape through extension sites and modular courses. In North America, focus is on helping students learn and serve in their ministry contexts while working with a mentor team to customize their educational journey.

Program Development

Alongside the need for faculty development came an opportunity to experiment with a reimagined doctor of ministry (DMin) program. For many years, students from Cameroon have pursued a DMin from Sioux Falls Seminary by spending up to a year in South Dakota, but they did not interact with Taylor Seminary. A new context-based DMin program allows students to remain in their contexts, enables faculty in Cameroon and North America to engage in meaningful faculty development, and sees all four seminaries working together.

The program was built through a collaboration that included the executive president of the Cameroon Baptist Convention and the executive leadership and faculties of all four seminaries. Thus far, eight Cameroonian faculty and six North American faculty have engaged in the program. Remarking on the experience, Samuel Ndeley, CBC director of Theological and Christian Education and chairman of the CBC seminaries board of governors, said, “I count it a real joy, privilege, and blessing to receive this twenty-first century DMin training from our mentors. This is the Lord at work toward the enhancement in living and teaching to be more contextually relevant for the Cameroon Baptist seminaries. We are being taught by the best team of evangelical, world-class professors drawn from Sioux Falls and Taylor Seminaries. We remain eternally grateful that God placed these ideas in the minds of faithful leaders. He is being glorified as they focus on empowering these Cameroonians. Gloria!”

Larry Caldwell, chief academic officer and dean of Sioux Falls Seminary, said that it has been “a real privilege to





help develop theological educators for the CBC churches of Cameroon. These Cameroonian DMin candidates have a passion for teaching relevant, contextualized courses for the pastors and ministry leaders in their churches.” He has also expressed that he is “excited about the positive impact these professors will have on the entire CBC as they implement their studies.”

Administration

Finally, the partnership is helping all four schools think creatively about the function of administration in a system that is efficient and effective. The CBC created the Theological and Christian Education Department that now oversees and integrates the work of both seminaries in Cameroon. In North America, Taylor and Sioux Falls now share a registrar and work together in online education, as well as the Kairos Project, a context-based approach to theological education. In each case, we are learning from each other as we create new ways to administer the work of theological education.

International missions will forever be linked with theological education through this common foundation: share the Gospel by exposing people to the transforming reality of the Kingdom of God and by developing disciples of King Jesus. By the power of the Spirit, theological education has the potential to transform lives, churches, and entire communities. We are blessed to partner with our brothers and sisters around the world to create contextually relevant systems that support this endeavor! ■

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 www.sfseminary.edu

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 www.taylor-edu.ca

The New World of International Missions



Sara-May Cardy

Director of Small Groups & Strategic Partners
Brentview Baptist Church, Calgary, Alberta

For many of us who grew up in church, hearing the phrase “international missions” within the context of a local church likely brings to mind many of the same images from decades past. But the world of international missions is changing, and how we engage with that as local churches is starting to change as well.

In Dan Hamil’s article, he mentions that international missions is who we’ve been, who we should be, and who we are becoming. I think these three statements are very applicable to not only our conference of churches but how we deal with international missions at the local church level.

Who We’ve Been

We need to celebrate the contributions we’ve made to communities around the world and thank those who have given their lives to this work even as we are being honest about the times when maybe we didn’t get it right. In a world that is searching for truth, authenticity, and transparency, this last part is really important. We need to acknowledge the things that we’ve done well and also look at how we can keep being creative and innovative as

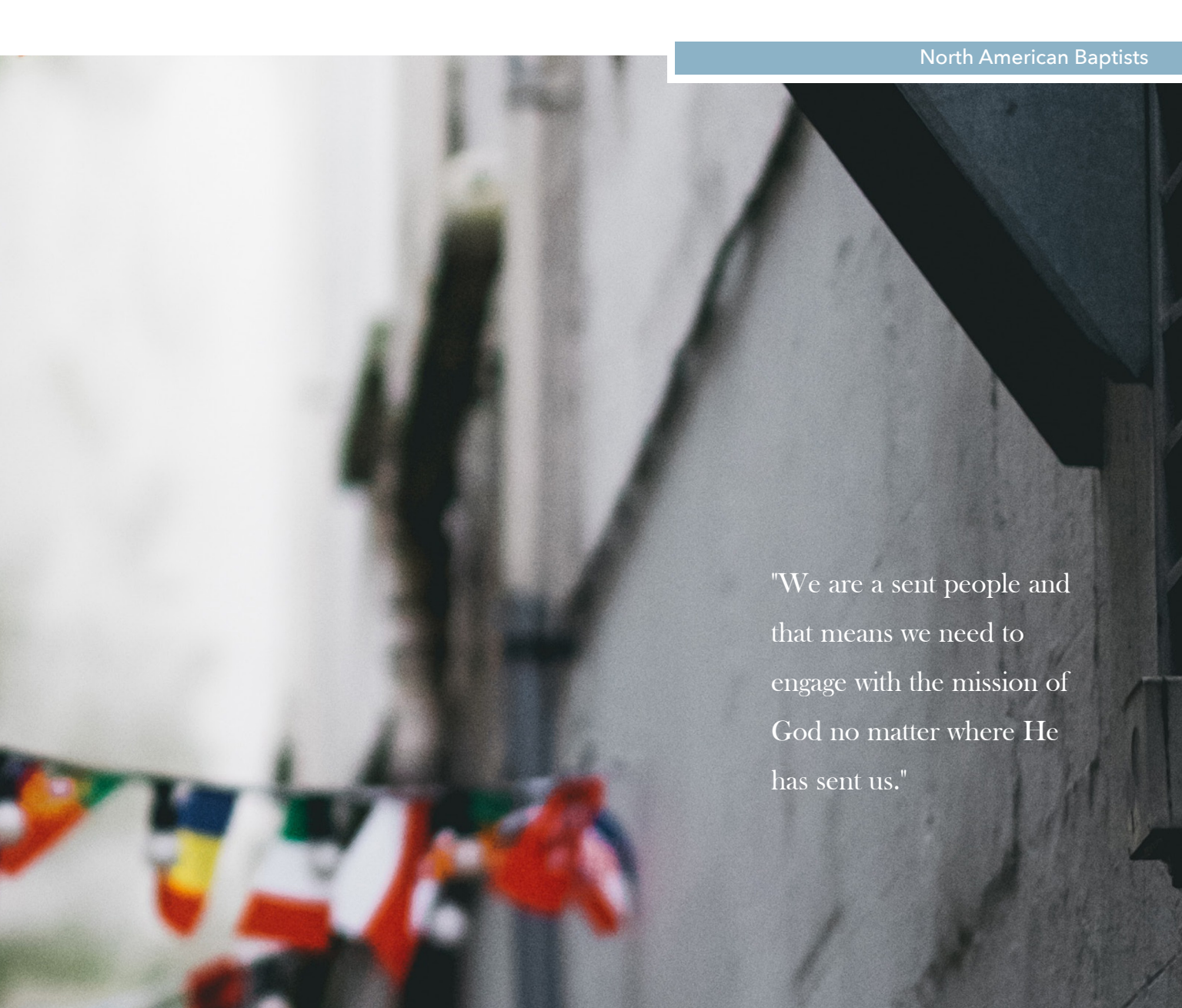
we move forward into the changing arena of international missions.

Who We Should Be

We serve a God who has a mission to redeem the world! Because of that, we are a missionary people who have the opportunity to engage in God’s mission of redemption and reconciliation. That gets me excited, and I hope it gets you excited, too! We get to be a part of God’s redemption plan for the whole world. We need to take a hard look at how we do ministry in light of who God is and how He desires to reach an ever-changing world.

Who We Are Becoming

We are a sent people and that means we need to engage with the mission of God no matter where He has sent us. For some that means being on mission in their local communities. For others that may include a call to engage in God’s mission somewhere else or to work with international groups in our local communities. We need to engage both the local and the global in new and creative ways.



"We are a sent people and that means we need to engage with the mission of God no matter where He has sent us."

International Students

We have the opportunity to train and equip international students. They can be an influence in a way that other North Americans may not be able to. We need to renew our focus on this area of international missions.

Share Stories

We need to share stories from our global workers, as well as those who have traveled to see them. The more we are able to build personal relationships with the women and men we support around the world, the easier we are able to continue building long-term support for them.

Focus

We need to become more focused. In order to engage our local churches, it is important that we create a rallying point—something that allows us to feel like we can be on mission together. In a world that is busy and chaotic, our attention spans are becoming more limited. In order for the church to more potently engage in international missions, we need to be more focused and strategic in our partnerships.

I am excited to continue to see the many forms through which God leads our church community and others to continue to partner with Him in His global mission. ■



I will
go
wherever
you go.



Marijana Čizmanski
National Missionary, Serbia

When I was 16 years old, I became a believer, and I always had it on my heart to help other people in need. That means that almost all of my Christian life I have been serving. About three years ago, I became part of a community development ministry in the Balkans and Central Europe called Community Health Evangelism. Most of our activities are connected with Roma (Gypsy) communities in Novi Sad, Serbia, or villages around Novi Sad. We are working with mostly undeveloped communities where people are not educated and are living in a cycle of poverty, corruption, and abuse.

I love what I do, but it is not easy. Yet, when I see a changed life, my heart is filled with joy!

I believe God can change communities and lives in Serbia. It is really very hard to live in a country that is corrupt and where wickedness is in every corner of life. People don't have hope here, so many people including many Christians, are leaving Serbia for a better life in Central or Western Europe. My husband and I have decided to stay with our two kids just because I strongly believe this is the place where God wants me to be a light.

My life is different today from what it was twenty-three years ago. He is my place of peace and refuge in the midst of the cruel world.

I want to be a light to others like God is the light to me. God has changed my life, impacting my soul and heart to the core of my existence. He loves me so deeply. My life is different today from what it was twenty-three years ago. He is my place of peace and refuge in the midst of the cruel world. My life has meaning because of Him and His grace. He gave me hope, love, healing, a future, and sustainability in Himself, and I hope to bring those same things to others. I love to spend time with people who are in need and seeking God's reconciliation.

Around ten years ago, I met Sandra, a Roma woman—and a single parent—who was hopeless and living with her two kids and her mother, father, and two brothers in one ruined and very old house. She became a believer and started going to the local church. I disciplined her for some time before I went with my family to live in Croatia for three years to study theology. I stayed in contact with her, but she stopped going to the local church. Four years ago I came back to Serbia, and from time to time I would have a coffee

with Sandra. Her health was in bad condition. She was unable to work, and help from the government was not sustainable. She needed to find a way to support herself and her two daughters.

Just a few months ago, I started to talk with Sandra about her relationship with God, where she is at with God, and her need for God. She started coming to the local church again. She knows about the ministry I am leading, that I work with very poor and mostly undeveloped communities. Even though this is a hard place to be in and a hard place to be a light, I believe God gave her a calling. She is supporting my ministry in every way she can. Although she is still not praying out loud, she is coming to our prayer meeting. She is also visiting these communities with me, and she is talking about God with the people there.

She is very young in Christ. Many things she still doesn't understand and know. We have started reading the Bible on a daily routine, putting on paper what it is that God is telling us, and then once a week we share with each other where God was in the last week and what it was God told us through the Bible. We talk about the passages that are not easy to understand, and we are praying in the light of the Bible.

God gave me support and a volunteer in a way that I had never thought of, and I am grateful for that. Together, we are being God's light in many dark places. ■

International Missions:

It's Who We Should Be



Serbia is located in Eastern Europe in the middle of the Balkans. The religious background is Orthodox. The number of evangelical believers in Serbia is less than 0.5 percent, and the total population is 7.5 million people.

Seeds of Faith



Randy Tschetter
Director
Heritage Commission

For two weeks in January 2018, Sioux Falls Seminary served as host to seven men and women from Cameroon. Along with a current missionary who serves with Converge, our guests were students in a doctor of ministry degree program being offered cooperatively by Sioux Falls Seminary, Taylor Seminary, the NAB, and the Cameroon Baptist Convention.

While these guests came to the Sioux Falls Seminary campus to learn, they also brought with them a vast amount of educational and ministry experience from which they could be our teachers. Several are currently professors and/or administrators at Cameroon Baptist Theological Seminary Ndu and Cameroon Baptist Seminary Kumba. They teach in a variety of subject areas, including theology, biblical languages, Christian heritage, missions, and pastoral care. Some have served as pastors of local churches or as field pastors. Moreover, they care for the families and people in their communities for only a tiny fraction of the income their American counterparts receive. Clearly, they are exceptional men and women of God.

One day during their stay, our friends visited the North American Baptist Heritage Commission, located on the campus of Sioux Falls Seminary, where they saw Cameroonian artifacts and heard a bit about the history of Baptist mission work in their homeland. They were fascinated by stories of people like Bea Westerman, Eleanor Weisenburger, Helen Marie Schmidt, and hundreds of others who served faithfully as missionary teachers, nurses, and doctors in Cameroon before most of our young friends were born. One of these friends, Esther, gladly received a copy of Laura Reddig's biography, *Love*



Them for Me, Laura. On another day, two others, Harrison and Ephriam, paid a visit to former missionary, Daphne Dunger. Among other things, they discussed details of the life and legacy of pioneer missionaries Dr. George and Louise Dunger and a clinic that still bears their name. Hundreds of names and thousands of stories could be added to the nearly hundred-year history of NAB missions in Cameroon. The seven students shivered in South Dakota winter temperatures for two weeks, learning from Drs. Caldwell, Rainbow, Strickland, and Thompson and blessing the lives of seminary personnel.

These visitors from Cameroon did not arrive at their current educational level or spiritual depth entirely on their own. Certainly there was a lot of hard work involved on their part, and they have been blessed with innate abilities instilled within them from their creator God, but they also stand on the shoulders of many they have never met, people who invested time, prayer, and dollars into planting seeds that are still bearing fruit. The Gospel

International Missions: *It's Who We Are Becoming*



writer reminds us that small seeds planted in faith and by faithful servants will produce significant results: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree” (Matthew 13:31–32 NIV). The Apostle Paul uses the imagery of planting and watering in describing his ministry: “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow” (1 Corinthians 3:6).

Similar stories can be told about the faithful witness of NAB missionaries like Edwin and Meraleen Kern, Doug and Sharon Woyke, Florence Miller, Ron and Joan Stoller, Bill and Luci Lengefeld, and Carol Potratz, all of

whom have planted seeds of the Gospel in Japan. Current missionaries like Lyndell Campbell-Réquia and Brandon Jones continue to build upon the work of servants like Dick and Beth Rabenhorst, Herman and Ardath Effa, and many others in Brazil.

The Heritage Commission is committed to preserving and retelling the stories of God’s work in and through the NAB. Though much of that pertains to international missions, we are mindful that every congregation and every individual has stories of how seeds that were planted have yielded a bountiful harvest. Thanks be to God! ■

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On mission, together.



35

Missionaries

serving in

8

Fields





BRAZIL

Lyndell Campbell-Réquia &
Paulo Réquia
Brandon and Marci Jones



CAMEROON

Dr. Rick & Debbie Bardin
Walter & Florence Grob
Calvin & Susanne Hohn
Jeff & Sonya Kilmartin
Elsie Lewandowski
Craig & Maureen Moody
Dennis & Nancy Palmer
Julie Stone
Kristi TenClay



EAST ASIA

Nick & Iris

HUNGARY & SERBIA

Ron & Jeannie Seck
Laszlo & Eszter Daróczi-Csuhai
Jozsef Csuhai
Marijana Čizmanski

JAPAN

Paul & Melissa Ewing
Yuri Nakano
Shan Reed

PHILIPPINES

Mayette Ativo-Bueno

ROMANIA

Paul & Tanya Gericke
Tamas & Tunde Modi
Vern & Gloria Wagner

RUSSIA

Gary Clatterbuck



International Missions:

finish strong



Dan Hamil
Executive Director
North American Baptist Conference



“Finish strong! Finish strong!” An anonymous yet enthusiastic bystander bellowed these encouraging words to me about two miles from the finish line of my last long-distance race just weeks ago. I’m not sure if this particular cheerleader saw the intense drippings of sweat running down my forehead or the grimace on my face from the growing pain in my knees, but those words from a stranger were the verbal elixir that I needed to endure the last hard miles to reach my personal finish time goal.

Over the last year, having caught a renewed bug for running, I’ve laced up my running shoes and logged two official half-marathons, a twenty-miler, and a full marathon. In these races—as well as hundreds of miles of training runs—I’ve learned that starting a race is fairly easy. With most races, the first few miles are candidly enjoyable, with the cheers of the onlookers and the energy of the other runners elevating the already flowing adrenaline. At the beginning there’s a bounce in the step! A vigor! An anticipation! But somewhere well past the middle of the race, while approaching the notorious runner’s wall, the once enjoyable adventure becomes demanding and difficult, and focus and discipline become essential. To finish strong, to fight through the pain and endure to the end, runners like myself mentally remind ourselves why we are persevering and what the end goal ultimately is.

Over 135 years ago, the North American Baptist Conference sent its first international missionary out on behalf of our churches. In the ensuing years, and with great enthusiasm, hundreds upon hundreds of long-term and short-term international missionaries, as well as myriads of volunteers, have been sent and supported by the NAB and her churches. Spiritual fruit from these international ministry endeavors ripened well, with people all over the globe finding salvation in and committing their lives to Jesus Christ. Churches were planted. Men, women, and children were discipled. Seminaries and schools were founded. Hospitals and clinics were launched. As a conference of churches, we experienced eras near our beginning with vibrant and overwhelmingly strong passion to raise up a next generation of global missionaries, financially support their efforts to minister

in difficult places, and pray fervently and regularly that the Spirit would strengthen their ministries.

In our present time, though, we live in a period when the church in North America has lost some of its zeal for global missions. According to a *Christianity Today* article, “while the U.S. still does send the largest total number of missionaries, . . . the prize for the largest percentage per million Christians in the population goes to . . . Palestine.”¹ In the related research study, the United States fell to number nine in the list of missionary-sending nations by percentage of the population. The church in North America may well be distracted and disoriented from the passion for international missions. In this era, we need to hear again a call to send the Gospel of Jesus Christ around the world and, with great endurance, to continue the task of reaching the nations. Like a runner slogging out those middle miles, but with a great goal ahead, we need to hear the voice of the Spirit crying, “Finish strong!”

While there is no end to the race of international missions this side of eternity, this exhortation to finish strong echoes Paul’s encouragement in 1 Corinthians 9:24 to run this race in such a way that we win.

This *Onward* centers our focus on international missions. I’d like to take a few moments and remind you that sending and supporting international missionaries is still an important discipline of the Church. And for us as a conference of churches, it’s not only important, it’s who we’ve been, who we should be, and who we are becoming.

¹<https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2013/july-online-only/worlds-top-missionary-sending-country-will-surprise-you.html>

International Missionaries:

It's Who We've Been

Starting in the earliest days of our conference, the NAB was forged with a white-hot passion for being a missionary people. Our history reminds us that this is who we've been.

Konrad Fleischmann is considered an embryonic leader of this conference of churches. Converted to Christ in Switzerland at the age of nineteen through the means of a Gospel tract, he would ultimately sense God's call to reach people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ that had so miraculously brought salvation and spiritual meaning to his own life. Not satisfied to simply stay and minister in Europe, Fleischmann immigrated to the eastern United States, hoping to encounter a population of people who would be open to hearing and responding to the Gospel. Experiencing the spiritual fruits of his ministry of preaching and evangelism, Fleischmann baptized five believers in March of 1843 in the city of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Just a short time later, in order to continue his labor of evangelism to German immigrants, he planted The German Church of the Lord that Meets on Poplar Street (later known as Fleischmann Memorial Baptist Church), the first church in the North American Baptist Conference.

Konrad Fleischman was a missionary, leaving his nation of origin to passionately join God in His work to seek and save the lost around the world. Other early NAB leaders also had a missionary spirit to leave the comforts of home and journey to Canada and the United States for the sake of the Gospel message. Since our beginning, leaders of our conference have committed their lives to the presentation and demonstration of the Gospel beyond their national borders.

Once established in North America, our inner missionary passion propelled this newly birthed conference of churches to send missionaries around the world. The very first international missionary sent by NAB churches was Emma Rauschenbusch, who traveled to minister in Ongole, India, in 1882. Before her missionary appointment, Emma received training at Wellesley

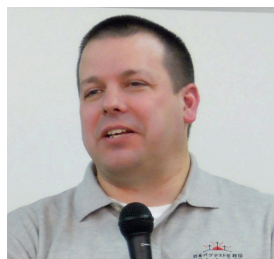
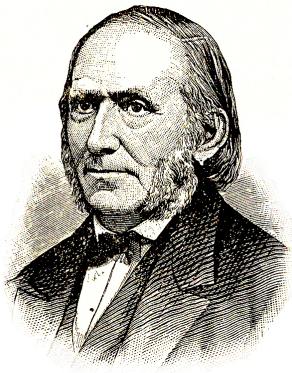
College and Rochester Female Seminary. She later was issued a PhD by the University of Bern in Switzerland. Called to live among the Madiga tribe—an impoverished and ostracized people group in India—Emma Rauschenbusch witnessed thousands of people in that tribe convert to Christ. Preaching about the person and work of Christ was central to this ministry. Telling of her colleagues who preached the Gospel, Rauschenbusch said:

Their preaching was characterized neither by profound thinking nor by brilliant oratory. It was just the story of Christ and Him crucified told over and over again. Much as, in the days of primitive Christianity, simple but earnest men told the sublime story of the life and death of Christ to everyone, so these men went out to make Christ the centre of their thoughts and words.²

Emma Rauschenbusch, our very first NAB missionary, left the comforts of North America so others would come to recognize Jesus as Savior and Lord. Being a missionary people is simply who we have been since our very beginning.



²Emma Rauschenbusch-Clough, *While Sewing Sandals: or, Tales of a Telugu Pariah Tribe* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1899), 287.



International Missions:

It's Who We Should Be

God's Word grounds our understanding of our identity. It communicates clearly the story of who Jesus wants us to become as His disciples. Three Biblical passages serve as key indicators to guide our obedience as Christ followers.

The Great Commission in **Matthew 28:16–20** takes our minds to the moments prior to the ascension of Jesus, when, surrounded by His disciples, He provides them their post-resurrection marching orders. He says, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19 NIV). The word "go" in this context actually has the meaning of "as you are going." The intention of Jesus was that His disciples would indeed be a people in motion, moving outside of their geographic zones of comfort to make disciples. And the core of this disciple-making was to be found in baptizing believers, which suggests an identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, and teaching them to "obey everything" that Jesus had indeed taught His own disciples.

The text of **Acts 1:8** is similarly familiar to many of us. It says, "and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

This verse, and its four-fold geographical unfolding, has been parsed for meaning by both theologians and preachers. In contemporary applications, there are various interpretations for where exactly a modern disciple's Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria are located. For those first disciples though, the lesson was clear. There was an intended journey to proclaim and demonstrate the Gospel at the geographical center of their world (Jerusalem), to the surrounding areas (Judea), to even more distant regions (Samaria), and ultimately to the ends or end parts of the earth. The life of a witness was a life of being sent into all of the world.

Revelation 5 takes us from the life of the early disciples to the apocalyptic vision of John. In this particular chapter, John sees the lamb who was slain surrounded by people "from every tribe and language and people and nation" (v. 9). It is hard to imagine that the early church did not connect this vision of all nations worshipping the eternal King with the command from that King to them to become a missionary people to all nations.

The biblical texts are clear when reminding us who we are to be—a Church on witness to the entire world, journeying beyond our own regions to spread the good news of Christ.



International Missions:

It's Who We Are Becoming

Over the last number of years, we as a conference of churches have talked about joining God on His mission to seek and save those who are lost. Among other tasks, this means we take seriously the duty to be a missionary people in our own neighborhoods and our own communities. It means seeing our identity as missionaries to our friends, coworkers, and neighbors.

I believe, though, that this heart for local missions will ultimately stimulate our hearts for international missions. A mind and heart filled with love and concern for the spiritually lost near to me should overflow with love and concern for the spiritually lost around the world. One group of evangelical leaders put it this way:

We believe God's mission, and thus the mission of His people, extends to every people, nation, tribe, and tongue; to persons of every gender, age, education, social standing, and religious persuasion (or lack thereof). Thus a missional church will intentionally embrace diversity locally and will cross social, cultural, and geographic barriers as agents of the *missio Dei*.³

If indeed we are becoming a people who believes God's mission (the *missio Dei*) is to proclaim the message of reconciliation to people, we should be passionate about telling that story at home and telling it abroad.

Finish Strong

The reminder is fairly simple. As a conference of churches, let's remember who we were—a group of churches started by missionary leaders. Let's remember who we should be—a biblically driven group of disciples called to go and be Christ's witnesses around the world. Let's remember who we are becoming—a conference on a missional movement to join God on His mission to reconcile a fallen humanity through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. The journey is demanding, but His yoke is easy.

International missions: Let's finish strong! ■



Looking for more?

If international missions interests you, there are plenty of opportunities currently available throughout the NAB. You can

- serve on a short-term team
- establish a long-term partnership between your church and an international church or ministry
- fill an open position for a defined term
- join a missionary team that is needing to expand

To explore what these and other international missions opportunities would look like in your life, visit nabonmission.org.

³<http://www.missionalmanifesto.net/>




BAM

Les Collins

President
Church Investors Fund

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Over the past couple of generations some significant trends have changed regarding giving as a percentage of income, going down from a high of around 10 percent of income during the 1950s to 2.6 percent last year. These changes are still in transition even now, with stats that say the average person 60 years or older is giving six times that of a person in their 30s. This means that giving is likely to continue to go down as the older generation passes away.

This drop in giving is happening at the same time as the number of staff in an average church has been going up. What was done by volunteers 50 years ago are now being done with paid staff. Jobs like youth pastor, children's worker or maintenance man are now commonly paid even in smaller churches.

Being squeezed from both ends are the other budget items that churches used to spend money on, such as facilities and missions. These no longer have the priority they once did, simply because something had to give to make their budgets balance.

These changes have resulted in fewer missionaries going out to foreign fields than previously. Where churches often spent 20 percent of their budget on foreign missions, now the average church is spending less than 10 percent, with many new churches giving nothing in this area.

This has meant that changes need to be made for those who are now interested in going out on foreign missions. The largest change has been in the amount of money that is today raised directly from individuals. Friends

and family are now the largest part of where support comes from, whereas a generation ago most funding by missionaries was done through churches.

For those who don't have a large pool of friends and family, they now have to look at other means of support.

One of those new areas of support for missionaries is BAM, which stands for Business As a Mission. In this new model the missionary starts a small business, which is then used to support him/her as a missionary in place.

I was recently at one of BAM's conferences in Los Angeles and I was surprised to hear how fast this idea is taking root. In areas that were once closed to missions, people are now getting in as businesspeople, and as such, the Gospel is moving forward in places where it once was not happening.

The other positive that has come out of this model is that having employees who are non-Christian creates a natural pool, although small, to reach out to with the gospel. I heard some glowing examples of this firsthand while at the conference.

The other good that has come out of this new idea is that missionaries who build a strong company in the foreign land for their own support are much more likely to stay in place long term, which is often what it takes to really make a difference.

However, this is not a complete replacement for the old

>> BAM continued

model, as there are a lot of examples where the model is proving to be a failure. The most typical example I witnessed was when someone with little business sense or experience used this model as a means of support and then failed miserably in the business. Missionaries in business, without the necessary skills, are often doing more damage than good, not only to their reputation but also to that of the larger Church. There is now a growing pool of examples of this happening. With around 95 percent of all businesses going bankrupt within five years of startup, it is imperative that people who choose this model have the necessary skills to run a business. Yet at the conference I attended, I would say the majority of those there to learn how to do it were people who did not have these skills.

The other problem with BAM enterprises are that the profits are being drawn out of the company prematurely for support. Most new entrepreneurs understand that there is a period of a few years in any startup where they cannot take a salary if the business is going to have the capital to survive and grow. With missionaries starting businesses

for immediate support, this means that the percentage of failures will be higher for BAM companies than it will be for the general pool of all new companies.

It is a common problem for any new idea just starting out to be seen as a complete replacement for the old. Yet, time often proves that instead of being a replacement for the old, it is just another possible method. And so it will be with BAM. I believe time will prove it to be simply a niche method for knowledgeable missionaries and not a complete replacement of the old ways.

Meanwhile BAM enterprises are presently exploding, with the number of missionaries using it growing exponentially by the year. In some cases, this will be a good thing because we work for a creative God, and He requires that we are also creative in how we accomplish His mission here. ■



Visit Our New Website

We welcome you to visit our new website at www.ChurchInvestorsFund.org. While there, we invite you to discover the various **investment** opportunities we have available to you. Whether you are a **church** or an **individual**, you can invest in Church Investors Fund and help build churches. We also encourage you to read our **Church Stories** and see the tremendous impact our investors have had over the years. And if you are a **church in need of financing** to purchase, build, renovate or even repair, discover how we can partner together to further His Kingdom.



Living H₂O

"Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful"
— 1 Corinthians 4:2 NIV



Uncover the Facts

Americans have recently spent more money buying Halloween costumes for their pets than the amount given to reach the unreached.

The Traveling Team.org/stats





8 Questions

with **Dr. Jim Renke**
Regional Minister
Upper Mississippi Region

Q: Would you tell us about your family?

JR: *Kris and I have been married since 1985. We have four sons: Andrew (Cassie), who lives in Sioux Falls; Michael, who lives in Modesto, California; Philip, who is currently working at Village Creek Bible Camp in Lansing, IA; and Jonathan, who is graduating from Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. We have one granddaughter (Clara) and a grandson on the way.*



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

JR: *It was a conviction that I wanted to serve God without reservation. And I've just tried to walk through the doors that God was opening. That, with the affirmation of others I trusted, led me in this direction.*

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

JR: *My biggest challenge is more a life challenge. It is to live in daily fellowship and awareness of Christ. It is too easy to live large parts of my life on autopilot. I want to grow in my dependence on Christ for every decision and action in my life.*

Q: What energizes you?

JR: *Kris and I love to travel. Being in new places and seeing new things always gives me joy, and if there is sun, so much the better. I also love the challenge of a long motorcycle ride.*

Q: What is your life verse?

JR: *I don't have a life verse, but usually have verses for different seasons of my life. Right now it is Colossians 3:3, "For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God."*

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

JR: *I love Jesus's bride, with all her promises and problems. During a season of ministry when I was reflecting on next steps, the Lord opened the door to share my life and experiences with other pastors and churches.*

Q: What do you most look forward to when serving as Regional Minister?

JR: *I am enjoying a season of encouraging and engaging pastors, leaders, and congregations in what it means to have God shaping us for His mission in the world around us. I am learning much. In some ways, I feel like I'm just starting to learn what it means to shepherd.*

Q: How can we pray for you?

JR: *Pray that I can learn and share faithfully with the church that Christ has chosen and loved. ■*



Who am I?



While growing up, I was called Billy by my mother, which caused lots of confusion. I have traveled around 2 million miles, while visiting 1/3 of the world's countries. I enjoy collecting many types of old things, and I was named after a great uncle who was one of the first missionaries to Nigeria.

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. ■

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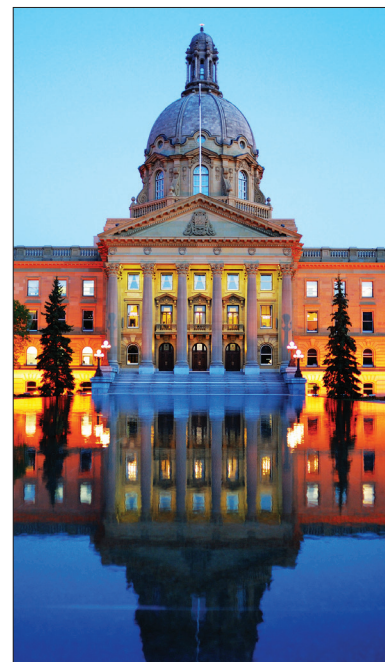


Break-Out Session: Would Jesus Own an IRA/RSP Plan?

If Jesus lived in our world today, and was serving in one of His local churches, would He have a retirement plan? Find out how you can take control of your finances, openly discuss this topic with your church, and begin to take control of your retirement.



Triennial Scholarship: Are you representing your church at Triennial? Visit the NAB Triennial Registration page at www.NABConference.org/Triennial, and click on the Pastor Scholarship link to see if you qualify.



Listen, Trust, Follow

Bob Glim

Vice President/Marketing
Church Investors Fund

Listen, trust, and follow God's direction. That sounds simple enough, but why then is it so difficult? It seems we can do one or maybe even two, but often not all three at the same time.

We tend to bounce between following a passion and ignoring it. We put time and effort into following this passion, only to pull away. We hear God calling us in a particular direction, but it really feels like an inconvenient time. Often, the busyness of life simply gets in the way. Perhaps it is our lack of belief that something we are this passionate about can be an everyday part of our lives...as if we don't deserve it. **We forget to listen.**

I think we often feel God calling us to the mission field, but we can't imagine how it could be possible. We think of the mission field as only somewhere in Africa, Japan, Brazil, Mexico, or some other foreign country. But the truth is, the mission field we are called to could be in a nearby state, city, or even in the town we currently live

in. God's mission field is everywhere, and if we feel God calling us to serve, He can make it not just a possibility, but a reality. **We forget to trust.**

It may mean that we need to remain where we are planted and make time to burn a whole new path - even if it is on nights or weekends. For example, if we have a passion to mold the impressionable minds of junior high students, then maybe we should volunteer to teach AWANA at our church. If we have a passion to help the homeless, then maybe volunteer a couple days a week at a local food pantry. If we have a passion to serve as a missionary, then maybe consider taking vacation time to serve on short-term mission trips. Activities such as these will fuel our passion and help us serve our purpose.

There are times in life when we as Christians will have a passion for something, and so we spend time praying to God for guidance. It can be a very exciting time in our lives, but it can also be a time when we can quickly lose

>>continued on next page >>

our way. It's not that we lose that passion, it's more that we begin to run ahead, presuming that we know where we are going. We become energized, we grow impatient, and we move forward without God's guidance. Soon that once vibrant flame begins to burn out. **We forget to follow.**

In Luke 5, Simon was called to follow Jesus. The fishermen, including Simon, had fished all day, caught nothing, and were finishing up the exhausting day by cleaning their nets. Except Jesus had other plans. Jesus said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch;" and Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." Simon **listened** to Jesus and **trusted** him. Soon after, they caught so much

fish that the nets began to break and the boats began to sink. Jesus not only showed them who He was, but he also provided for Simon's family. Jesus then said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and **followed** him." Simon obediently followed.

I'm not saying we should quit our job to blindly pursue a passion. What I am saying is that we should **listen** to the passion and purpose God has placed on our hearts, **trust** that He will provide, and **follow** Him every step of the way. It is then that we can have the greatest impact on this world, a world that is in desperate need of seeing God's love through His children. ■



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Cameroon and Beyond



Keir Hammer
Director
White Cross Canada

The history of missions in the NAB is incredibly positive. We take joy in celebrating missions, of those who have gone and come back and those who are still preparing to leave. We celebrate those who would go and those who continually stand in support. I have repeatedly experienced this wholesome atmosphere of sharing the Good News together—whatever our roles.

The history of White Cross also reveals this desire to reach out together in love and ministry. White Cross grew out of the medical work that was integrated into the missions stations in Cameroon. The love of God was not just proclaimed, it was also demonstrated. As the medical work expanded, supplies were purchased, made, and shipped from North America through White Cross. I firmly believe that the phenomenal growth of the work in Cameroon is because everyone worked together to share and demonstrate the Good News.

The work of White Cross continues to support the missions work in Cameroon and beyond. However, in a somewhat different model, the Cameroonians are now the primary players. Not nearly as many missionaries are going to West Africa, but the work is growing. In all of this we continue to be part of the medical ministry in Cameroon, partnering through our giving to and support of White Cross.

We also have opportunities to reach our own communities through the work of White Cross. I have been refreshed by accounts of White Cross groups incorporating the larger community into their work. Interestingly, it seems that some groups who were shrinking in numbers have found ways to expand into their communities.

Involving others in touching lives demonstrates to them what it means to love our neighbour. People who are not open to a sermon are open to the work of White Cross. Initially, they see the Gospel at work through this ministry. Through the relationships that develop, there are opportunities to share about why we do this work and thereby plant seeds that the Spirit of God can bring to fruit. This does not diminish groups who receive strong support from within the church—we are all contributing to the mission of God. Let us not grow weary but keep our eyes and hearts open for the opportunities that God continues to place before us here, in West Africa, and in the rest of the world. ■

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

SUNDAY

1 In honor of Canada Day, pray for the leaders of your country, both on the local and the national level. Ask that God, who established their authority, would guide them to lead justly.

MONDAY

2 There are a number of NAB-affiliated camps across North America; in the middle of this camp season, ask God to make His presence known to all who spend time at these outdoor refuges.

TUESDAY

3 Lift up Triennial in prayer as the final details are still being set in place.

Shaped
FOR MISSION

WEDNESDAY

4 As the United States celebrates Independence Day, praise God for the freedom found in Christ and ask Him how you can make His name known in your neighborhood today.

8 Pray for NAB missionaries beginning their home assignment this month, Walter Grob and Paul and Tanya Gericke. Pray that the time away from the field would be restful even as they meet with supporters and visit churches across North America.

9 Lift up in prayer the organizations and seminaries in Brazil, Cameroon, the Philippines, and Russia where the NAB is partnering to help train pastors and leaders for ministry.

10 Ron and Jeannie Seck are looking for trained healthcare professionals to join the Community Health Evangelism team to work with the Roma people in Central Europe. Pray that God would lead the perfect people to this team.

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

15 Lift up in prayer all those who will be attending Triennial next week. Ask God to overcome any hindrances to safe travel or safe arrival.

16 Pray for the women's seminar being taught in Japan tomorrow by Yuri Nakano and Shan Reed. Ask for God to use this seminar to build up those in attendance and strengthen the church in Japan.

17 Pray for interim regional minister 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.

18 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 Thank God for your parents and the parental figures in your life who helped instill in you the character traits that have served you well in life. Ask God who He wants you to encourage and build up.

23 Pray that churches and individuals across the NAB would be effective in their efforts to reach out to international students in their cities and towns.



24 Pray for the pursuit of racial righteousness in your own life. Ask God to open your heart to His guidance and direction for new opportunities to grow.

25 Lift up the Triennial speakers: Don Davis, Barry Jones, Mark Buchanan, and Stephanie Fast. Ask God to use their words to make an impact and challenge all those attending the conference.

29 Thank God for the myriad of ways He met those attending Triennial. Ask Him to provide safe passage home to all those traveling.

30 Thank God for the relationships that were built, renewed, and strengthened last week during Triennial. "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds" (Hebrews 11:24).

31 Pray for your church today, asking God to help it be a sign, servant, and foretaste of the Kingdom of Heaven to the surrounding neighborhoods.

THURSDAY

5 Cover the Jones family in prayer as they near the end of four weeks of pre-field missionary training in Colorado Springs, CO. Pray for God to provide the financial support they need to finally leave for Brazil.

FRIDAY

6 As much of Canada observes Civic Holiday, celebrating local history and culture, thank God today for the rich history of the NAB and the history of your local church, regardless of how old or young it is.

SATURDAY

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

Missional ENGAGEMENT

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

13 Pray for the openings serving alongside Nick and Iris in East Asia as international workers. Ask God to lead the perfect partners to these open positions.

14 Pray that God would direct the perfect candidates to the open ministry need working alongside the Ewings in Japan.



International MISSIONS

19 Pray for regional ministers Dr. James Renke (Upper Mississippi Region) and Pastor Larry Burd (Atlantic 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 Krahn (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 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.

Leadership FORMATION

26 Pray for the necessary business taking place at Triennial, that God's Spirit would be a tangible and powerful presence directing the course of the NAB.

27 Ask God to bind His people together as one as they gather for the general sessions, take part in special events, and mingle with members of the NAB family from around the world.

28 Pray for all of the volunteers scheduled to help throughout Triennial, whether assisting with registration, serving as ushers, or caring for children.



Ethnic PARTNERSHIP

INTERCESSOR JULY 2018

INTERCESSOR

AUGUST 2018

Missional ENGAGEMENT

5 Pray for the church plants and church planters across the NAB; thank God for their desire to spread the Gospel, and ask Him to embolden them.

6 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.

7 Pray for the spouses of the ministry leaders in your church. Being married to a pastor often requires an outpouring of patience and compassion that is not always easy to provide. Ask that God would fill them with the fruit of the Spirit.

International MISSIONS

12 Pray for the continued development of the hydroelectric dam at Mbingo Baptist Hospital in Cameroon, which will provide stable and affordable electricity to power the sensitive equipment at the hospital.

13 Pray for Sonya Kilmartin's travels and transition back to Cameroon after spending time with her parents, who have some substantial health struggles.

14 Pray for the Japan Baptist Conference youth gathering taking place over the next couple of days. Ask the Holy Spirit to make His presence known and work in the hearts and souls of those in attendance.

Leadership FORMATION

19 Pray for interim regional minister 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.

20 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.

21 Pray for the handful of senior homes affiliated with the NAB. Pray they would continue to be Spirit-filled homes full of caring staff and a loving community.



Ethnic PARTNERSHIP

26 Pray for the women in leadership positions at your church, which often comes with a unique set of challenges.



27 Pray for Cross-Cultural Equipper, Bud Fuchs, as he works with international students in Utah and trains churches across the NAB to host similar ministries in their cities and neighborhoods.

28 Pray for our national missionaries serving in local ministries throughout the Philippines, Serbia, Romania, and Hungary.

WEDNESDAY

1 Lift up the Gateway Team from Washburn Baptist Church in Washburn, ND, who are in the middle of a two-week trip to Japan to partner with the Japan Baptist Conference and Komyo Church.

THURSDAY

2 Pray for the regional ministers and search committees who are actively seeking pastors for NAB churches. Pray that God would guide their decisions and grant them wisdom as they seek to fill these open positions.

FRIDAY

3 Pray for the ministry leaders of your church by name, asking God to guide them as they lead their respective ministries.

SATURDAY

4 Pray for the fiesta being held this month in a local village near Novi Sad, Serbia, by Marijana Čizmanski and Proclaim, a mission organization in Germany. Ask God to use this to bring hope to people who often have none.

8 Pray for the ongoing efforts of Cam Roxburgh, VP of Missional Initiatives, and Kent Carlson, VP of Leadership Formation, as they seek to teach, encourage, and guide NAB leaders striving to be missional in their local contexts.

9 Pray for the continued efforts to engage ministry leaders and pastors in missional endeavors through Blue Ocean, Ethos, and The Bonfire.

10 Lift up the next generation of leaders in your church in prayer. Pray for their growth as men and women of God and as servants of Christ filled with the Holy Spirit.

11 Pray for the small group leaders and Sunday school teachers who serve your church as they prepare for tomorrow. Pray that God would use them to impact and transform lives for His Kingdom.

15 Pray for safe travels for the Jones family as they travel to Kenya to visit Marci's parents, a first for the whole family. Ask God to bless their time with family.



16 Pray that the seeds of being *Shaped for Mission* planted in the hearts of those who went to Triennial would continue to sprout and grow deep roots in the weeks and months to come.

17 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. Pray for Karl and Vanderleen Uebelhoe as they fundraise to join this ministry.

18 Pray for Shan Reed as she continues to adjust to being back in Japan after returning from home assignment.



22 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.

23 Pray for regional ministers Rev. Dan Heringer (Central Plains Region), Rev. Terry Holley (Great Lakes Association), and Dr. Bob Krahn (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 Dr. James Renke (Upper Mississippi Region) and Pastor Larry Burd (Atlantic Association). Ask God to continue to give them wisdom as they serve the pastors and churches in their area.

25 Pray that the Sioux Falls Seminary and Taylor Seminary students set to begin the fall semester would be well prepared for the classes and studies ahead of them.

29 Lift up the ministry of Hispanics for Christ in prayer, asking God to continue to use this ministry to encourage Hispanic pastors, establish ministry hubs in underserved areas, and plant churches throughout North America.

30 Pray for those unreached families who visited a church this summer for a VBS program; ask God to continue to move in their hearts and seek Him.

31 Pray for the Youth Ministry Leadership Team as they seek to connect youth and youth leaders across the NAB with each other and with God. Pray as well for the Women's Ministry Leadership Team as they seek to do the same thing with women.

Blue Ocean is a one-year training experience with pastors and leaders throughout North America that gathers three times, in three different locations, to explore what it means to have a renewed theological vision of the church on mission, serving as a sign, servant, and foretaste of the Kingdom of God. With the guidance of presenters who are experts and practitioners in missional and formational theology, Blue Ocean attendees will reflect deeply on missional theology, spiritual formation, and what it means to be the church in a post-Christendom world. In addition, this communal journey is designed to help us connect intimately with other pastors and leaders from the NAB who are traveling this same road together.

If you hunger for a renewed vision for the church centered on mission and formation and are interested in joining us on the next journey, there are currently still spots available for our 2018–19 Blue Ocean cohort! Send an email to lschmidt@nabconf.org to sign up!



2018-2019 Schedule

Gathering 1 – Missional Theology and Ecclesiology
Vancouver, Canada, October 15–17, 2018

Gathering 2 – The Formation of God's People
Sacramento, February 25–27, 2019

Gathering 3 – Living as a Faithful Presence
Chicago, April 30–May 1, 2019

"The Bonfire"
Chicago, May 1–3, 2019

