

SPRING 2019

# ONWARD

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

the rhythm of rest

SILENCE. SOLITUDE. SABBATH.

CHURCH INVESTORS FUND • HERITAGE COMMISSION • NAB • NAB STUDENT MINISTRIES  
SIOUX FALLS SEMINARY • TAYLOR SEMINARY • WHITE CROSS • WOMEN'S CONNECTION



# Inside This Issue



## ONWARD SPRING 2019



### 4 Rest for Chumps by Harrison Lippert



### 8 Competing for Sabbath by Stu Streeter

### 12 Daily Sabbaths by Melissa Ewing



### 18 Pause and Prayerfulness by Rob Loane

### 24 Intercessor



#### THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

### 10 Toward a Cadence of Life That Includes Abundant Rest by Sam Nikkel

#### NAB STUDENT MINISTRIES

### 13 Finding Rest and Recuperation at The Summit by Luke Miller

#### NORTH AMERICAN BAPTIST CONFERENCE

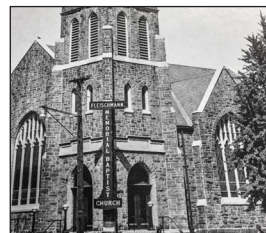
## 14 The Rhythm of Rest

God has created us to live our lives in rhythm.  
by Dan Hamil



#### WOMEN'S CONNECTION

### 6 Setting a Vision for Sabbath by Amber Dowd



#### HERITAGE COMMISSION

### 22 Our Faithful & Fallible Heroes by Randy Tschetter



#### CHURCH INVESTORS FUND

### 20 Stewarding Our Time

by Bob Glim

If you would like additional copies of *Onward*, contact us:  
[communications@nabconf.org](mailto:communications@nabconf.org)  
(916) 797-6222

A few years ago, I was on a three-day retreat with the co-senior pastor of our church, Mike Lueken. These were fairly regular retreats we tried to create time for. Our elder board strongly encouraged us (translation: required us) to embrace these retreats as ways to stay connected and to rest from the crazy pace of ministry. We would spend the daytime hours in solitude and in the evening check in with each other, where we would, at times, imagine quitting and becoming a butcher or a mail carrier. On this one particular retreat, a long-time friend of mine called and asked, “Where are you?” I told her I was on a three-day retreat. She asked, “What are you doing?” I said, “Not a whole lot. Spending time alone. Resting. Reading. Praying. Talking.” She laughed a dark, jealous laugh and said, “Wow. It must be nice to have a job that allows you to do that.” I mumbled something lame and inadequate in response. I didn’t know what to say.

I realize that it is indeed very nice to have a job that provides the opportunity for extended times of retreat. And I fully realize that not everybody has that same kind of opportunity. But this dear friend was a high-powered, high-producing, highly compensated, hard-working, twelve-hours-a-day businesswoman. The truth is that she could have chosen a job that had normal hours and she would have had sufficient time for occasional retreats. Her soul craved for these times of refreshment, but she chose not to reorder her life in order to pursue them. She came to believe that she had no choice other than to live at the pace she was living. She was wrong.

I am in constant conversations with pastors, leaders, businesswomen and men, laborers, homemakers, volunteers—you know, pretty much everybody—who are tired. And not just physically tired, but soul tired. Their souls are exhausted from lack of care and attention. Many have forgotten that they even have a soul. They are spiritually worn out. Some people have the capacity to live with this spiritual thinness, this soul exhaustion, for decades, sometimes a lifetime. Others, perhaps the majority, simply cannot. And in many and varied ways, they crash and burn. Sometimes I think they are the more fortunate ones. You can recover from a crash and burn and begin to live differently. Many do.

This edition of *Onward* will unapologetically plunge right into these areas of rest, solitude, and Sabbath. We all know the excuses. We all know the external demands. We all know that we have a tendency to believe that our particular life situation requires that we live our lives exactly the way we are living them. And yet our souls grow thin and tired. Our hearts grow smaller. Our faith weaker. And God, in His grace and goodness, gently reminds us that we are to regularly rest from our labors, attend to our souls, and remember that there is one God, and we are not Him.



A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kent Carlson".

**Kent Carlson**  
VP of Leadership Formation  
North American Baptist Conference



# Rest for Chumps



**Harrison Lippert**

Senior Pastor  
Steamboat Rock Baptist Church

**A**t 7:30 a.m. on a Friday morning, I read an email that said, “I was wondering if you would be willing to contribute an article on rest, solitude, and Sabbath for the next edition of *Onward*?” Though it was my day off, I was in the office because I owed an overdue sermon outline to Monique Dorow, our church secretary, yet I was reading email instead of preparing the aforementioned outline because I am a master procrastinator. Joanna Clark had emailed me because I recently enjoyed a sabbatical. I had sought counsel from Kent Carlson about five days of solitude that was part of that sabbatical. His advice? “Don’t expect too much . . . any sort of epiphany; you are not Moses! You are just a chump trying to get alone with God.” Chump – “a foolish or easily deceived person.” I am too often a chump, but I did find solitude and the sabbatical to be a sump pump for my chump soul.

Weekly striving to delay work wears on a person. I need rest. I need solitude, because with so many messages competing for my attention, I cannot hear myself think or follow through on a thought, let alone hear from God, especially if I don’t want to hear

what He might say. If you are a pastor who has not had a sabbatical, a member of a congregation who has never granted their pastor a sabbatical, or simply a procrastinator tired of putting off rest, I would encourage three things:

## PLAN

Fifteen and a half years ago, when considering a call to Steamboat Rock Baptist Church in Steamboat Rock, Iowa, I proposed a sabbatical policy. I thought it would never be easier to agree to one than when any consequence is at least seven years away. The moderator, a wise leader who had already accommodated several requests from me, politely but firmly suggested any discussion about sabbatical leave be tabled to a later date.

## PERSIST

Nine years later, the deacons again raised the idea of a policy for sabbatical leave at a congregational meeting, but heading into a capital campaign for a building project caused some strong resistance, which tabled talk again. Thirteen years in, Arnie Luiken, then chairman of the deacon board and a good friend of former pastor Dennis Dewey, heard that Pastor Dewey was taking his second sabbatical leave from his current church. Arnie determined to draft a sabbatical policy for Steamboat Rock. The policy required congregational approval for a pastor’s sabbatical, with funding and a plan in place with any proposal. This



time the church leadership team adopted the policy and announced it to the congregation.

## SEEK SUPPORT

With this policy in place, I proposed applying for a National Clergy Renewal Program grant. The Lilly Endowment offers grants up to \$50,000 for a congregation to offer their pastor a sabbatical. The congregation approved my plan contingent upon the grant. The proposal process was quite thorough, with narratives to describe the church, the pastor, the plan, the process for garnering support within the congregation, the budget, and the timeline of the leave period. A couple other pastors helpfully shared their prior proposals with me. Frankly, applying wore me out, and with the uncertainty of approval, I was relieved just to receive confirmation that the completed application arrived in their Indianapolis office before the deadline.

When September came, we received word that the proposal was approved. Almost a third of the money went to the church for special events, pulpit supply, and staffing support. The remainder funded travel and lodging for our leave. Planning execution began for booking flights, securing lodging, training, and scheduling preachers for thirteen Sundays. Surprisingly, anticipating leave brought renewed energy, like the quickening pace that comes with knowing the end of a task is close at hand.

Our congregation sent us off last May, and the deacons presented us a new camera! After a week at home, followed by the five days of solitude, my wife and I traveled to Israel for a course on the history and geography of the Bible. We returned home to our three youngest and took them with us to a

camp in the Montana mountains. We traveled on to Edmonton, where Cory Seibel of Central Baptist connected me with local pastors to discuss issues pertinent to my ministry. We flew in our five adult children and new son-in-law to enjoy a week together. The day before they flew home, we drove to the Canadian Rockies and survived an ascent up Old Man Mountain, a name that resonated in my joints days later. After Triennial, we drove home.

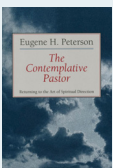
During my time in Edmonton, I visited the Vanguard University library and rediscovered Eugene Peterson in a book titled *The Contemplative Pastor*, with a refreshing rebuke for the busy (which he equates with lazy) pastor. I ordered a bunch of his books and have been working through them. In chapter three of *Working the Angles*, my current read, Peterson gives the most practical discussion on Sabbath I have ever read. His point is that Sabbath is more than the Puritan Sabbath some of us grew up with and more than the secular day off. Sabbath is a day to both reflect on God's work in us and to play, celebrating our life in Him.

It does not require a Lilly Endowment grant to choose to follow Peterson's example to establish a weekly rhythm for Sabbath. Anyone can spend a day alone with God once a month or five days once a year. The same actions will be necessary: plan, persist, and seek support. On my way home from my five days alone, I drove past the farmhouse of one of our recently deceased members. This farmer knew God and practiced solitude for years in his own home. I called his son and asked if I might use the house for an occasional retreat. He agreed, and I just recently enjoyed two days there. God repeatedly grants rest to any chump who will take Him up on the offer. ■

## Resources for Rest

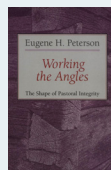
If your congregation has no policy for sabbatical leave, I would be glad to forward Arnie's. If you would like to apply for a Lilly Endowment National Clergy Renewal Program grant, visit: <http://www.cpx.cts.edu/renewal/apply/national-program>. I can share a copy of our congregation's proposal if it would be helpful to you.

Email me at [harrison@steamboatbaptist.org](mailto:harrison@steamboatbaptist.org).



### The Contemplative Pastor

Eugene Peterson  
Peterson speaks words of wisdom and refreshment for pastors caught in the busyness of preaching, teaching, and "running the church."



### Working the Angles

Eugene Peterson

Peterson calls the attention of his fellow pastors to three basic acts—which he sees as the three angles of a triangle—that are so critical to the pastoral ministry that they determine the shape of everything else.

# Setting a Vision for Sabbath



**Amber Dowd**

Women's Connection Leadership Team  
North American Baptist Conference

---

*Through Sabbath,  
God intends for us to  
experience more joy,  
more renewal, and  
most importantly,  
more fellowship with  
Him in the midst  
of our creative and  
hard-working lives.*

---

**A**n unfamiliar square piece of wood wedged in the wall of my son's closet caught his attention one day. We removed the board and discovered it was covering a crawl space entrance to a pitch dark attic. A flashlight revealed piles of dusty, flattened cardboard, exposed nails, and, in my imagination, a family of rats. Nothing could convince me to go inside. Meanwhile, my son saw beyond the dank creepiness. He envisioned the space's potential as a perfect secret hideout and begged permission to go inside and explore. My husband caught his vision, and in they went. Ideas developed: they cleaned out the junk and from there proceeded to transform the space. Walls were insulated and finished off. Electricity was brought in for lighting. Old carpet was placed on the floor, and even a small, foldable couch was squeezed in through the hole. The vision was topped off with a hobbit-style wooden door complete with iron hinges and handle, setting the stage that anyone who enters (and whose knees can handle crawling in) is expected to use their imagination. It created an entirely new kind of space unlike anything else in our house. When it was completed, the first thing my son did inside was lay down and take a nap. And then he played.



Sabbath could be described as a God-designed secret hideout. My son's hideout is still part of our house, but it's removed just enough from the tasks, messes, and drama of our bustling family to allow for another kind of existence. *Similarly, Sabbath compels us to cease from the work that pulses through us day in and day out to dwell at a different pace with a different intended purpose. It is a soul space dedicated to resting and to playing.*

The practice of Sabbath can seem elusive. Work easily becomes all-consuming. But God knows we need more to our life. Practicing Sabbath is the art of cultivating and exploring this *more* space. Through Sabbath, God intends for us to experience more joy, more renewal, and most importantly, more fellowship with Him in the midst of our creative and hard-working lives.

After the important step of setting a regular life rhythm for Sabbath has been done, spend time thinking about how you want the time to be shaped. Maybe ask yourself, "Will this activity I'm considering be life-giving to my body, mind, and soul?" If the answer is yes, then it is

probably a great Sabbath activity. Sabbath gives permission to entertain the fun ideas. If you like more practical examples, maybe start with activities such as long walks, long naps, leisurely drives, hobby time, quiet time, friend time. . . . You get the picture. Then, during your Sabbath time notice what God does to your body, mind, and soul as you take part in the activities you chose for that day. Go a step further and ask God to expand your vision for Sabbath—what more might He have for you? It could even become more than you had imagined in the first place. He is our imaginative heavenly Father, and Sabbath is a gift He has designed for us!

As Sabbath becomes established in our lives, it becomes like the little hobbit door in my son's closet. It's a place of invitation, and we always know it's there for us to enter in. The joy and renewal of practicing Sabbath will hopefully be infused back into the hustle and bustle, bringing life, imagination, and perspective of God's presence into our work that wasn't otherwise present. Are you ready to set a vision and get building? ■

NORTH AMERICAN BAPTISTS  
women's  
connection



[nabconference.org/nab-womens-connection](http://nabconference.org/nab-womens-connection)

[wm.nabc@gmail.com](mailto:wm.nabc@gmail.com)

## Women's Connection is featuring *Finding I Am* by Lysa TerKeurst as our theme study for 2019.

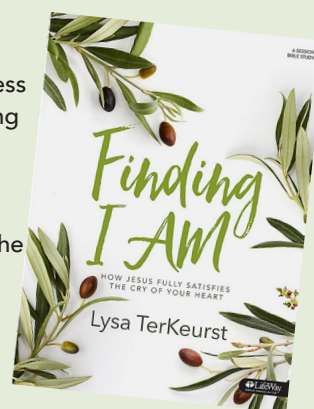
What is the deep cry of your heart? The ache in your soul that keeps you up at night? The prayer you keep repeating? Jesus not only cares about this deep, spiritual wrestling, He also wants to step in and see you through it.

In *Finding I Am* you will join Lysa TerKeurst on the streets of Israel exploring the seven 'I AM' statements of Jesus found in the Gospel of John. Through this interactive, in-depth study you will be trading feelings of emptiness and depletion for the fullness of knowing who Jesus is like never before. Accompanying videos bring the words of Jesus alive as Lysa shares with us biblical truths in the setting of Israel.

As you participate in this study it is our prayer that you will:

- discover how Jesus is the key to satisfaction by learning the crucial significance behind each of His 'I AM' statements.

- trade feelings of emptiness for the fullness of knowing who Jesus is.
- grow in biblical literacy with this exploration of the Gospel of John.
- gain a better understanding of how Jesus' words 2,000 years ago are so very applicable to the answers you are searching for today.



Women's Connection is offering your NAB church ONE FREE COPY of *Finding I Am* by Lysa TerKeurst. A woman in leadership in your church can request this copy by contacting Heather Senges at [hsenges@telus.net](mailto:hsenges@telus.net). Include in your request your name, address, phone number, church name, and leadership position in your church.



# Competing for Sabbath



**Stu Streeter**

VP of Church Planting and Ministry Advancement  
North American Baptist Conference

*“Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.” —Psalm 34:8 (NIV)*

**W**hen the topic of Sabbath rest comes up, I am often troubled at our lack of desire for this beautiful gift of God. I am convinced there are dozens of factors in play, complexities in each of our lives that make this a difficult rhythm to rewrite, and one for which volumes have already been written. I'd like to suggest that we explore what I call dominoes of desire that must fall in the life of any Christian hoping to unlock the joys of Sabbath rest.

Like most things in life, whether good or bad, we do them out of some kind of desire, and the driving desire is rarely what is seen on the surface. The common response—“I just cannot find a day in the week for Sabbath; with work and church commitments, every hour is full”—speaks to desire far more than it does

circumstance in one's life. Facing these desires will be the most fruitful approach to recapturing the kinds of rhythms God always intended us to enjoy in His created order.

## **We must face our desire to out-achieve**

Our very own Kent Carlson wrote a wonderful article in *Christianity Today* some years back exploring ambition in the life of the Christian leader.<sup>1</sup> This has served me well in facing my own deep desire to achieve and where that desire comes from. Additionally, *Dwell* by Barry Jones beautifully explores the speed of life and its relationship with Sabbath. But so often when

<sup>1</sup> You can find a reprint of this article on the NAB website at [nabconference.org/leaders-insight-pastoral-ambition](http://nabconference.org/leaders-insight-pastoral-ambition).



talking with Christians, it takes but a mere few minutes of exploring this Sabbath rest issue to find they have a person or two in their life, sometimes several, who they simply desire to outperform. The desire to win, or at least to compete, is fuel for a fire that burns hot and is burning out good people: trying to impress a boss, competing with a co-worker for the promotion, an inner voice that says, “This must be done.” This is a soul-shrinking way to live and one that is difficult to face, but certainly a domino that must fall before any regular rhythm of Sabbath can be enjoyed. Once we rest with relative security in the truth that there is someone who is out-achieving us in our world, we will have opened a whole new corner of our souls to accept God’s love and care.

### We must face our desire to be essential

When asked how I manage to take a weekly Sabbath given I work a full-time job and serve as lead pastor in my church, the discussion often steers quickly to questions of how I handle emergencies at church. “What do you do when someone is in the hospital?” “How do people get in touch with you on your Sabbath?” These are helpful questions and ones that need answers, for sure, but a deeper dive into what drives them is far more helpful in the long run. The honest truth is we have a thing around our house called Donkey in a Ditch Friday. This is our casual reference to a Friday (our normal Sabbath) when things don’t go as planned and one of us must engage in our normal work for a period of time, or even the whole day. On these days, we work hard to remember the words of Jesus in Mark 2, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath” (vs. 27).

These emergencies aside, the issue below the surface requires us to face our desire to be essential. Each of us carefully designs non-essential aspects of our job so that only we can do them in hopes of making ourselves essential. We do this in some feeble attempt to convince the rest of the world it cannot go on without

us. I have a friend who owns a multi-million dollar manufacturing company but still does all the supply ordering so as to remind his staff regularly that they cannot do their work if he does not do his.

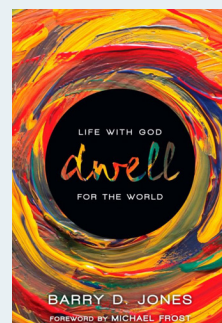
It is a tremendous gift to know through practice that God’s love for us is not predicated on what we accomplish. The Father was well pleased with Jesus long before He healed anyone, and we were God’s masterpiece far before we did the good things planned for us long ago. Sabbath rest is for us, but not always in the ways we imagine; sometimes the greatest gift we

can be given on a weekly basis is a reminder that the world will continue to function even in our absence.

Our tendency to be non-practitioners of Sabbath is rooted in competing desires, to be sure. But after some reflection of those desires—and this list is by no means exhaustive—it is simpler than we often think to right this ship. I have been consistently encouraged to find that the change inside myself

happens more swiftly than I’d once imagined and its Gospel impact far more beautiful than I had even dreamed. Paul’s words in Philippians 1 echo in my soul as I practice this ancient and beautiful practice: “Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (vs. 6). ■

**“[Sabbath is] a regular reminder that it is God who created and sustains the world and that it will continue to go on spinning whether or not I lift a finger. In Sabbath I’m reminded that the world’s maintenance does not depend on me.” —Barry Jones, *Dwell*, pg. 163**



## Resources for Rest

### Dwell

Barry Jones

Missional teacher and pastor Barry Jones shares his vision for authentic Christian spirituality focused on becoming more like Jesus.

# Toward a Cadence of Life That Includes Abundant Rest



**Sam Nikkel**

Director of the Healthy Pastor's Initiative  
E P Wahl Centre at Taylor Seminary

**I** don't ever recall being greeted with the question, "Are you keeping rested?" On the contrary, people more usually ask, "Are you keeping busy?" This is a reflection of the reality that most of us live at a harried pace. Why are we living at this frantic pace, and is there a better way to live?

I propose that a cadence of rest, creative play, and productivity can increase the quality of our lives. I remember being introduced in about grade three to the three roots that support health: food, exercise, and rest. Of these three roots, nutrition and fitness are very prominent in our culture and continue to be strongly supported by business ventures. Rest does not get the same attention.

Why does rest matter? A painful experience of burnout in my midlife awakened me to the danger of neglecting rest and self-care, but I will say more about my story later. First, let's explore this question through three lenses: physical, psychological, and spiritual.

Physically, our society is in trouble in the area of rest. There is a school of thought that suggests the growing sleep debt in North America is a bigger hazard than our national financial debt. Studies show that a lack of physical rest affects our immune system, cardiovascular health, mental health, and performance. Physical rest really matters, and many people are not attending to this important component of physical health.

Scholars in the field of psychology suggest that a

frantic life pace could be evidence of unformed dimensions of our inner world. In her excellent book, *Rest, Play, Grow*, psychologist Deborah MacNamara gives us a beautiful framework of thinking about living life with a cadence of rest, play, and productivity. Her premise is that healthy inner formation includes attachment of belonging, loyalty, love, being known, significance, and sameness. When we have healthy roots of attachment in these areas, we can rest, play, and be creative. We do not need to find our core identity needs in our productivity.

It may surprise you to learn that the Bible has a lot to say about rest. In fact, the NIV Bible mentions rest and derivative words for rest 496 times. This is more than once for each day of the year. Our theology of rest is grounded first in the creation account, as God rested on the seventh day (Genesis 2:2). The implications of this are significant. Rest was not an accommodation of fallen humanity, not a concession to our frailty. God resting on the seventh day was an expression of His essential nature. This action of resting was a celebration of completeness and sufficiency.

We see a practice of this rest in Psalm 23:1–2. The kind Shepherd takes the initiative to lead His sheep to still waters, and He makes them lie down in green pastures. This image of the shepherd teaches us both the priority and practice of rest.

Curiously, when I look at the Gospels, I just don't see Jesus asking the question, "Are you keeping busy?"



Instead, we hear Jesus's well-known invitation in Matthew 11, "Come to me, all you who are wearied and burdened, and I will give you rest. . . . Learn from me . . . and you will find rest for your souls" (vs. 28–29). Here rest is both received and found. We receive the gift of rest as Jesus performs the deep restoration and healing that we need in our inner world, then we find rest as we create sacred rhythms and a cadence of space to our days, weeks, and months. We then live out of rest, discerning what God is already doing and receiving the resources to join Him where He is at work.

In nature we find a model of this cadence of rest and productivity. There is a season of harvest and fruitfulness, but there is also the winter season, a time of quietness and renewal. Plants and animals rest and prepare for another spring and summer full of hustle and bustle and productivity. The challenge for us is to build a rhythm to our lives that includes physical and spiritual rest and restoration, which then fuels productivity.

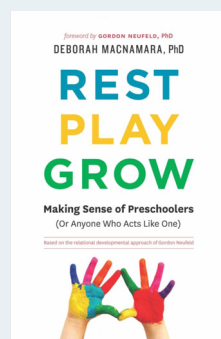
My own narrative illustrates the hazard of neglecting rest. For twenty-five years, I served in ministry and worked very hard and did not have a cadence of living that included self-care and rest. In my late forties, I began to sense my inner strength and vitality draining away. Even though I was still active in seeking God diligently through my spiritual disciplines and working at a regional and national level, I felt like my inner world was becoming more and more dry. I had lost my joy in living and serving. I was becoming deeply fatigued and increasingly depressed. In many ways I was a dead man walking. It culminated in an emotional and physical crash at midlife, which left me in a dark, despairing place for twelve months. Through a beautiful season of physical rest, spiritual renewal, and professional re-tooling, I was restored to life and vitality. In retrospect I could see how my deficit understanding of rest and self-care had culminated in the erosion of my inner world. This painful valley in my life forged a new life message, and I now deeply believe in the value of a rhythm of rest, creative play, and productivity. The cadence of those elements in my life allow me to live with a deep sense of joy and gratitude, even as I

accept and attend to healthy boundaries to protect my limitations.

For the past few years, the E P Wahl Centre at Taylor Seminary has helped pastors work through these concepts at an event called THRiVE. Through teaching, discussion, and personal reflection on the five key areas that contribute to resilience in ministry, THRiVE invites pastors and spouses to consider the importance of rest. Now, through the Kairos Project and the partnership between Sioux Falls Seminary and Taylor Seminary, we expect to make THRiVE available to seminary students, pastors, and lay leaders throughout the NAB!

When we embrace rest, we identify with and celebrate the completed work of God through Jesus Christ. Then, out of that posture we become creatively productive for God's glory. ■

*After ministering with The Navigators for twenty-five years, Sam Nikkel served as executive pastor at McKernan Baptist Church in Edmonton, Alberta, for fifteen years. He now gives leadership to the Healthy Pastor's Initiative, part of the E P Wahl Centre at Taylor Seminary. Upcoming pastoral events include the Sabbatical Preparation Workshop on March 6, 2019, at Taylor Seminary, which is also available online that day, and the THRiVE Pastoral Retreat, May 28–31, 2019, which addresses five themes of pastoral resilient ministry. Details of these events are available at [www.taylor-edu.ca/wahlcentre](http://www.taylor-edu.ca/wahlcentre).*



## Resources for Rest

### Rest, Play, Grow

Deborah MacNamara

This resource was created for parents of small children, but MacNamara's research reveals the vital need for rest and balance in life.



[www.sfseminary.edu](http://www.sfseminary.edu)

[www.facebook.com/SiouxFallsSeminary](https://www.facebook.com/SiouxFallsSeminary)



[www.taylor-edu.ca](http://www.taylor-edu.ca)

[www.facebook.com/TaylorUpdates](https://www.facebook.com/TaylorUpdates)

# Daily Sabbaths:

## Loving God with Heart, Soul, and Mind



**Melissa Ewing**  
NAB Missionary  
Japan

**I**n Matthew, Jesus calls us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and mind. This love helps me focus my heart on His compassion and grace, my soul on drinking in God's love, and my mind on His truth and righteousness. Communion with God is where we find rest and renewal. Here we can worship Him with all our heart, asking Him to take hold of our emotions. We can give Him our soul, asking Him to fill it with His holy presence. Here is where we can submit our minds to God's truth, righteousness, and way of thinking. But this vision, I believe, means communing with God daily in Sabbath.

I believe Sabbath is a state of being. When I love God with my whole heart, submitting my emotions and feelings to Him, He shows me how to rest. When I love God with my whole spirit, training my soul to turn and reach for Him in times of joy, happiness, loss, hurt, and trouble, I find rest. When I love God with my whole mind, training myself to think on His truth, righteousness, and those things worthy of praise, He gives me rest.

Ephesians 3:17–19 encourages us to grow our “roots” down deep into

God's love. His love is to be the foundation that keeps us strong. His love is to be our strength, our understanding, our motivation to live for Him, serve Him, and strive to be worthy of Him. As our hearts

**By taking the time  
to Sabbath with  
God, drawing from  
His never-emptying  
well of love, we are  
strengthened and  
able to understand  
where our ministry  
should be.**

are drawn to Him by His love, we should desire to Sabbath with Him daily.

As missionaries, home assignment is an extremely unique time. It is a time when we release the ministry in Japan to others and embrace a different form of ministry in North America. There are expectations placed on us by ourselves, family, and supporting churches, as well as the NAB International Office. It is not a time for furlough, but a time to connect Japan with North American churches and build

relationships with them. It's a busy time sharing, visiting, and catching up on a spectrum of particularities. In the midst of this, there is a continuous desire to encourage people to be on mission with God and deeply planted in His love. The ever-changing focus and expectations of home assignment draw us to reach deeper into God's love and Sabbath with Him.

God wants us to walk with Him daily in this broken Eden, and that is where the tension of Sabbath lies. Are we really walking with God, or are we too focused on His mission because it is so important? By taking the time to Sabbath with God, drawing from His never-emptying well of love, we are strengthened and able to understand where our ministry should be.

Submitting our time and our will can be a challenge, but drinking in His love in that quiet stillness before the Lord is something that we are called to do. It is in this practice that our heart, soul, and mind find a healthy balance. Little by little, as we learn to commune with God and allow His love to bring balance to our heart, soul, and mind, we will find ever-increasing rest and Sabbath as His beloved children. ■



Learn more about Melissa Ewing and other NAB missionaries at [nabonmission.org/missionaries](https://nabonmission.org/missionaries).



# Finding Rest and Recuperation at The Summit



**Luke Miller**

Lead Pastor

Calvary Baptist & Vintage Church

**I still remember** arriving at my first Triennial in Orlando, Florida, and looking around to see different pastors catching up and sharing about what had been going on in the latest season of their lives: old friends remembering “the ol’ days” at Sioux Falls Seminary or Taylor Seminary, including former NABC students sharing laughs about different NABC memories. For me it was a little different. I did not go to any NAB schools but was brought in fresh out of school to start the youth ministry at Calvary Baptist. I had been a youth pastor at the church for a year, yet my knowledge of the NAB was fairly minimal. I knew that there was something special about the NAB community based on what I had witnessed in Orlando, yet I hadn’t really experienced it myself.

It wasn’t until 2013 that I truly got my first taste of who the North American Baptists are. I was invited along with all the other youth workers in the NAB to gather at The Summit in Galveston, Texas, which was a chance to unwind, get to meet people serving across North America in youth ministry, and be challenged by our speaker. This is where I saw the NAB’s desire to foster the spiritual growth, health, and well-being of those in youth ministry.

Admittedly, I arrived at The Summit going through a rough season in ministry, to the point where we were not sure what God had in store for us after we returned. It was in this rough moment that I firmly believe I saw what it was like to be a part of the NAB community, no longer feeling like I was on an island by myself. I will never forget being surrounded by youth workers, the Youth Ministry Leadership Team, and the NAB leadership as they prayed for where God would have us be next. The beautiful thing was that I was not the only one; as others stepped forward to be prayed for, I remember saying, “This is a community that I want to be a part of.” Over the next weeks and months, I received countless emails that reassured me that people were praying for me. The friendships forged over my time in Galveston are still strong today, creating a support network of NAB youth workers who genuinely care about each other, their longevity in ministry, and their spiritual health.

Regardless of whether you are a member, leader, or pastor at an NAB church, I hope you see how important this time away is to the youth workers at your church. It is important to me to share the impact of The Summit on my life. This time of hearing people’s stories, sharing my own heart, having a chance to relax outside of church ministry, and building that support network allowed me to continue on where I was serving.

The next Summit retreat is in Phoenix this April. I encourage you to send your youth leaders and their spouses to join others from the NAB for what will surely be a great time to relax, recuperate, and be encouraged by what God is doing in the lives of other youth workers. ■

## THE SUMMIT

It's not too late to join us at The Summit!

[nabconference.org/the-summit](http://nabconference.org/the-summit)

Registration ends March 15, 2019.



[nabconference.org/nabstudents](http://nabconference.org/nabstudents)



[youth@nabconf.org](mailto:youth@nabconf.org)

# The Rhythm of Rest

God has created us to live our lives in rhythm.



**Dan Hamil**

Executive Director  
North American Baptist Conference

**R**ecently I walked three blocks from my house to the performing arts center of the local college, purchased a ticket for that evening's concert, and listened to the student orchestra perform a variety of musical pieces. Though the entire night was filled with wonderful music, the force of one particular arrangement was striking. In that piece, the sound swelled from the stage with penetrating intensity. The brass section drove the theme with fanfare, while the woodwinds saturated the thematic space with a constant run of notes. The percussion section whipped itself into a frenzy, with drums, cymbals, and bells stomping rhythms that added to the ferocious tones of the song. Near the end of this piece, with accelerating tempo and crescendoing volume, the sound from the musicians roared and pulled the audience into a musical apex. And then, suddenly, the music stopped. In the midst of the intensity, there was intentional quiet. For a moment or two, the auditorium reverberated with an echo of sound. Then, utter quiet. Deafening silence. Calm. With the previous adrenaline rush thrust upon the audience dissipating, the conductor's baton brought the orchestra to resolve the piece with a quieter air.

from *The Rest of God*



**Mark Buchanan**

Author

**T**he root idea of Sabbath is simple as rain falling, basic as breathing. It's that all living things—and many nonliving things too—thrive only by an ample measure of stillness. A bird flying, never nesting, is soon plummeting. Grass trampled, day after day, scalps down to the hard bone of earth. Fruit constantly inspected bruises, blights. This is true of other things as well: a saw used without relenting—its teeth never filed, its blade never cooled—grows dull and brittle; a motor never shut off gums with residue or fatigues from thinness of oil—it sputters, it stalls, it seizes. Even companionship languishes without seasons of apartness.

God stitched into the nature of things an inviolable need to be left alone now and then. The primary way people receive this aloneness and stillness is, of course, through sleep. We can defy slumber only so long—propping ourselves upright with caffeine, manufacturing artificial alertness with drugs—but past a certain point, we collapse. We must submit to sleep's benign tyranny, enter its inescapable vulnerability and solitariness (in sleep we're easily besieged or abandoned, and we are by ourselves even when enwrapped by another's arms). Unless we do, we die.

Not long ago I tried to outrun my limits. I was preparing to go away

and so crammed my last few working days precariously full, like a bus in Delhi. I was up hours before dawn, answering e-mails, finishing reports, speed-reading correspondence, tossing back responses. Then off to a breakfast meeting, and from there into a day of troubleshooting, firefighting, strategy planning, troop rallying, complaint management. A working lunch. More appointments, deadlines, negotiations, each segment as intricately fitted to others as the parts of a circuit board. A quick dinner with the family. Back to a meeting that deadlocked in niggling details. Home about midnight. Only to get up the next day, after lying awake half the night thinking about all the things I had



Musicians who read musical scores refer to these times of silence or quiet as rests. A rest is a moment when the performers stop playing their instruments. Notes are interrupted by silence. Those entrenched in musical performance know that musical scores are filled with these times of rest. Sometimes the whole orchestra rests at once. Other times, one section—be it the woodwinds, brass, strings, or percussion—stops playing while other sections continue. Rests bring necessary, overarching rhythm to a composition. They are common and necessary.

Our North American culture influences our attitudes and behaviors regarding the pace of our lives and how we view rest. Western culture elevates self-improvement with its accompanying values of hard work, production, and personal achievement. These values drive people to ignore the importance of rest and quiet. The International Labour Organization suggests that “Americans work 137 more hours per year than Japanese workers, 260 more hours per year than British workers, and 499 more hours per year than French workers.” In a similar vein, a representative of the Canadian Mental Health Association recently

indicated that Canadians are spending more time at work, stating that “people are wearing too many hats in this day and age to keep their businesses going. It makes it very difficult to take time away from work.”

As people who love and obey God’s authoritative Word, we know that God created human beings with a need to stop, to pause, to be quiet, and to rest. We need rest for our physical, emotional, and social well-being. We also need times and seasons of rest to draw closer to God, whether we accomplish that in solitude or in community with others.

Over the last number of years, Mark Buchanan has become a good friend to the North American Baptist family. A seminary professor, former pastor, writer, and speaker, Mark is a communicator who has spoken at our last two Triennials. One of Mark’s books that has impacted me and many in our conference is *The Rest of God*. In this work, Mark points our hearts and minds toward the wisdom of God in creating us to need and find rest. (We’ve provided an excerpt from this book below that will encourage you to think more deeply about and find more regularly the practice of rest.)

*Dan’s article continues on page 16*

failed in or forgotten to do, and repeat a slight variation of the same thing. In the midst of that, I sat down in my study to read something or write something—ask me what, even at gunpoint or with the promise of vast wealth set before me, and I couldn’t tell you. And I collapsed. I fell into a sleep so deep that, had God plucked a rib from my side, fashioned a woman from it, and brought her to me naked, I wouldn’t have so much as twitched. The office administrator came by to ask me something, saw me, watched to make sure I was breathing, and went and fetched my assistant, and the two stood in the doorway, laughing. I was oblivious. I was far, far away—in the darkness of Sheol, in the brightness of seventh heaven, who knows? My body had been pushed and bullied, cajoled and coerced long enough, it staged a general strike, an all-out boycott. I had lost the power to resist.

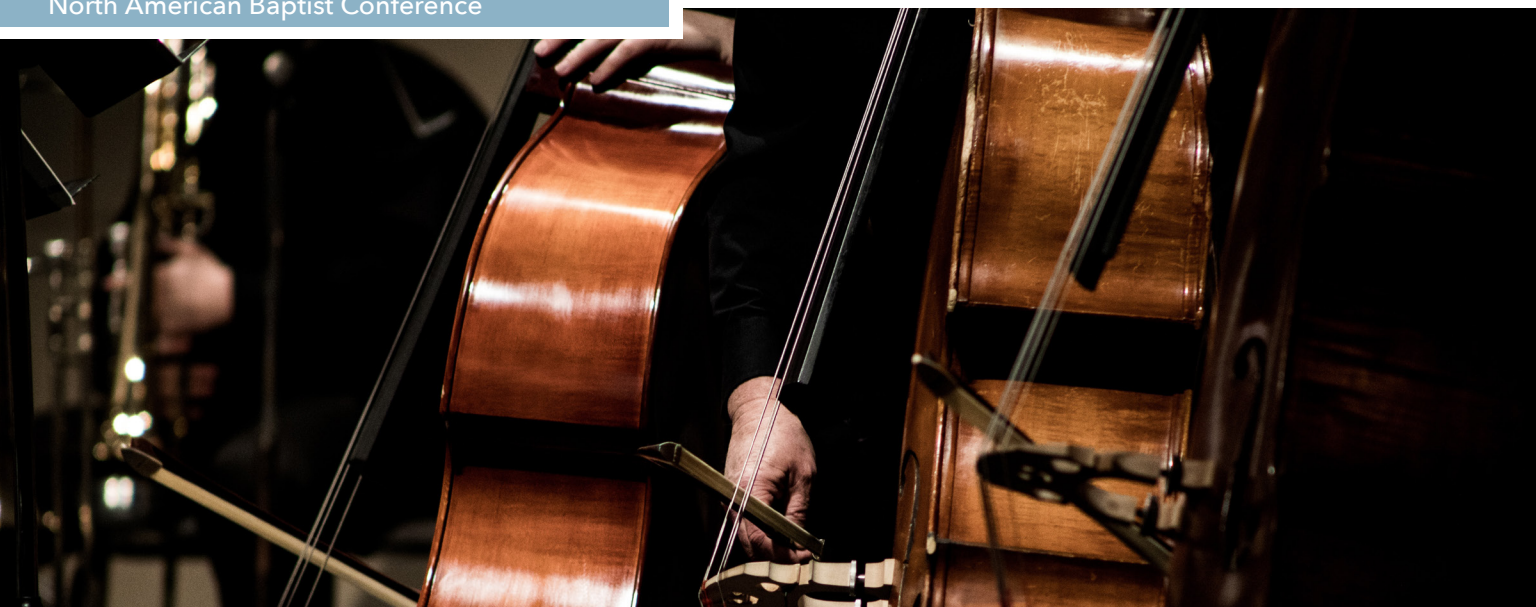
I slept.

The tricky thing about Sabbath, though, is it’s a form of rest unlike sleep. Sleep is so needed that, defied too long, our bodies inevitably, even violently, force the issue. Sleep eventually waylays all fugitives. It catches you and has its way with you.

Sabbath won’t do that. Resisted, it backs off. Spurned, it flees. It’s easy to skirt or defy Sabbath, to manufacture cheap substitutes in its place—and to do all that, initially, without noticeable damage, and sometimes, briefly, with admirable results. It’s easy, in other words, to spend most of your life breaking Sabbath and never figure out that this is part of the reason your work’s unsatisfying, your friendships patchy, your leisure threadbare, your vacations exhausting.

We simply haven’t taken time. We’ve not been still long enough, often enough, to know ourselves, our friends, our family. Our God. Indeed, the worst hallucination busyness conjures is the conviction that I am God. *All depends on me. How will the right things happen at the right time if I’m not pushing and pulling and watching and worrying?*

Sabbath-keeping requires two orientations. One is Godward. The other is timeward. To keep Sabbath well—as both a day and an attitude—we have to think clearly about God and freshly about time. We likely, at some level, need to change our minds about both. Unless we trust God’s sovereignty, we won’t dare risk Sabbath. And unless we receive time as abundance and gift, not as ration and burden, we’ll never develop a capacity to savor Sabbath.



As you think about your own need to pause or rest, consider these three reminders about why rest is important to our spiritual lives with God.

**Rest reminds us that God is the creator and we are simply stewards.**

Christian theologians have long held that God created the world *ex nihilo*. In other words, God created all there is out of nothing. While the Near Eastern creation narratives of non-biblical religions suggest that their gods created from existing materials, the biblical text of Genesis drives the point that God Himself created out of nothing. As John 1:3 clearly states, “All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made” (ESV). In the Garden of Eden, following all of His creative acts as recorded in Genesis 1 and 2, God appointed Adam and Eve as stewards to maintain or oversee what God had created.<sup>1</sup> Adam and Eve were not inactive in the garden. Though the biblical text doesn’t tell us the details of this stewardship, common sense seems to indicate there was effort. Nevertheless, Adam and Eve were not the ultimate creators of the earth and the garden; they were merely stewards and overseers of the creative order. As Psalm 104 tells us, “[God causes] the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth” (vs. 14).

<sup>1</sup> “The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.” (Genesis 2:15)

When we stop to rest from our production, our work, our various endeavors, we are reminded that God Himself is the good and gracious creator of all that is. God ultimately causes the growth of plants and livestock. Our work is good and proper, but God deserves the glory as creator of all that is.

**Periods of rest give us time to listen to God’s voice.**

Tapping into the miraculous power of God, Elijah defeated the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. Coming off the mountain, and perhaps experiencing some emotional exhaustion, Elijah shelters in a cave to rest. There, the Word of the Lord came to Elijah:

And he said, “Go out and stand on the mount before the Lord.” And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” (1 Kings 19:11–13)

We, not unlike Elijah, are overwhelmed with a cacophony of noises that drown out God’s Word from speaking to our hearts, minds, and souls. Ear buds are



constantly glued to our ears. Social media buzzes our phones continually throughout the day. TVs provide white noise even when we are not watching them. Stores, elevators, and waiting rooms play background music without end.

Is it any wonder that we don't hear the voice of God in the midst of the noise of our day? Rest may require not only stopping from producing, but it may require that we stop from interacting with the noise of our days. Mark Batterson, pastor of a thriving congregation in Washington D.C., asks this probing question in his book, *Whisper: How to Hear the Voice of God*, "Is it possible that what we perceive to be relational, emotional, and spiritual problems are actually hearing problems—ears that have been deafened to the voice of God? And it's that inability to hear His voice that causes us to lose our voice and lose our way."

Seasons of rest allow us to truly seek the Lord's face.

**Rest reminds us that ministry effectiveness is from God's hands, not ours.**

As people who truly desire spiritual fruit through the ministry of our churches, we can be tempted to "produce" that fruit. John 15:4 is emphatic in saying, "As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me."

Periods of rest remind us that God is on mission and at work in the lives of people in our churches and our communities, even when we are at rest. Periods of rest also provide us the opportunity to seek the very power of the Holy Spirit, which allows us to then do ministry out of the abundance of God's power, not the deficit of our own.

The book of Acts points directly to the true power that birthed the early church.

Acts 4:8 – "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, . . ."

Acts 4:31 – "And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness."

Acts 6:5 – "... Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit . . ."

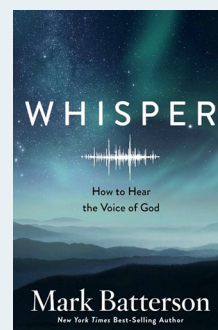
Acts 7:55 – "But [Stephen], full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God."

Acts 11:24 – "For [Barnabas] was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord."

Acts 13:9 – "But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit . . ."

It is God Himself who performs the good work of ministry through the power of His Spirit through people who are fully submitted to Him. Our labor in the ministry is one of submission and obedience. So step back from the ongoing movements of your life and rest. Charles H. Spurgeon succinctly said, "Rest time is not waste time. It is economy to gather fresh strength. . . . It is wisdom to take occasional furlough. In the long run, we shall do more by sometimes doing less." Jesus said, "Come to me . . . and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). ■

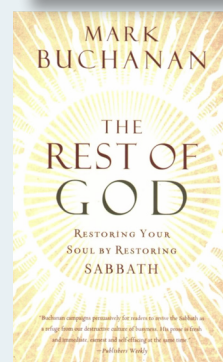
## Resources for Rest



### **Whisper: How to Hear the Voice of God**

Mark Batterson

Batterson helps us share the unique message God wants to speak through our lives by learning to hear His voice.



### **The Rest of God**

Mark Buchanan

Buchanan gives practical advice for restoring the sabbath in our lives.

# Pause & Prayerfulness



**Rob Loane**

President  
VantagePoint3

*But now more than ever the word  
about Jesus spread abroad;  
many crowds would gather to hear him  
and to be cured of their diseases.  
But he would withdraw to deserted places and pray.*  
Luke 5:15–16 (NRSV)

**I** recall sitting with a group of friends the Sunday after September 11, 2001. The tragic events of the week had obviously jarred us all. I cannot remember much of what was said, but the reserved and heavy feel of the conversation lingers with me. Truthfully I remember only one comment from the evening. A friend who worked in an MBA program at a large university, a community of movers and shakers, ambitious men and women who were looking to get a further edge in the competitive world, shared of the events' effect on his work community. He commented, "I am surrounded by highly motivated men and women who are absorbed day in and day out with the stuff of business. They are fanatical about the business of business. This week brought pause to their lives."

*Pause.* As I remember it, we each resonated with this comment. We had taken in the disturbing images and commentaries, and we had struggled to make some initial sense of things, and, in the midst of our confusion, all the common urgencies of our lives had been re-shuffled; we all stepped back and found ourselves in something much larger than the usual occupations and thoughts of family and work. That week, and the weeks that followed 9/11, offered all of us pause.

Since that Sunday, I find myself often returning to my friend's words. They have grown to remind me of the pause-less lives that so many of us live.

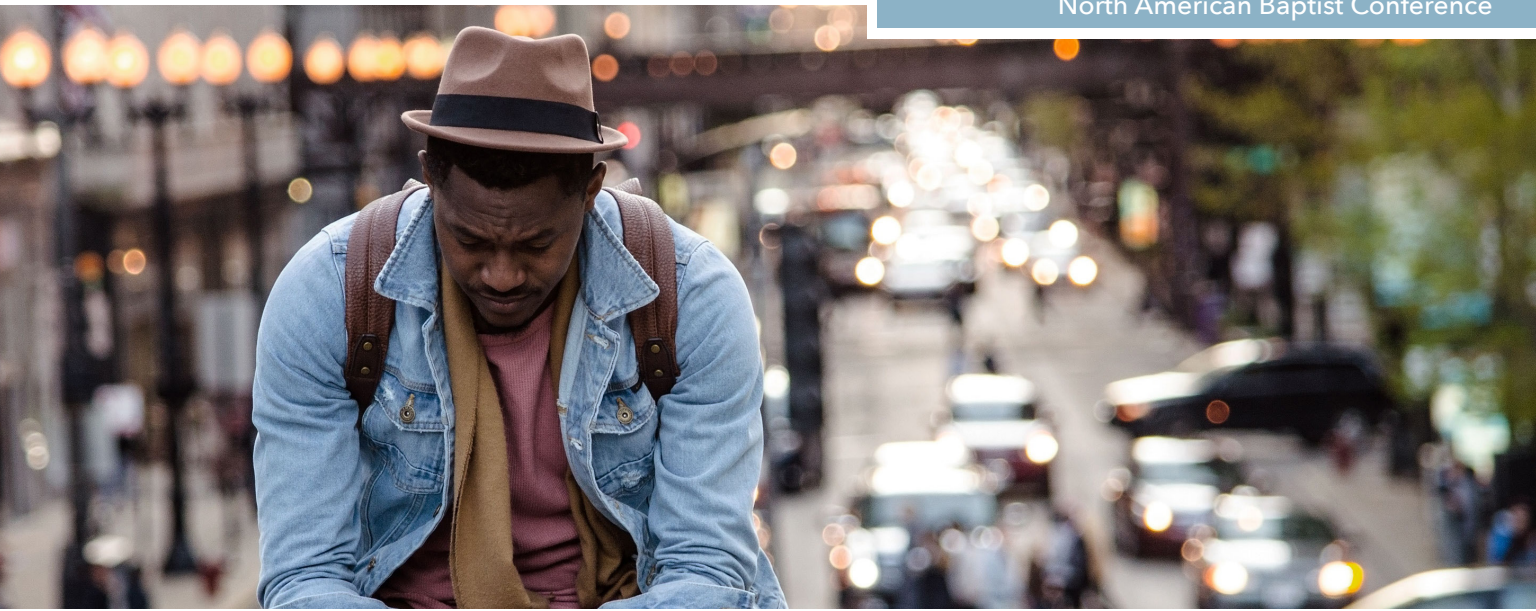
Life presses in on us and, perhaps instinctively, we do all we can to press back. Many good things and important things stack up, and we busy ourselves with such things. In time, these many things shape our schedules and even our minds into a form ill-suited to any sort of stepping back.

Many of us believe that we cannot afford the luxuries of slowing and reflecting: such are the luxuries of poets, artists, monks—persons we consider, at best, marginal to the real business of life. And, unless we are interrupted by some event outside of ourselves, whether job loss or personal rejection or death or something like 9/11, we rarely stop—we rarely step back.

But our many activities and ambitions do squeeze out critical human concerns (e.g. community well-being, job effectiveness, parenting children, a flourishing inner life, a God consciousness, kingdom responsibility). Whether we are Christians or not, we are all vulnerable to living a way of life that fails to pay attention to the most important things in life. This is the great threat of living a pause-less life.

One of things that jumps off the pages of the gospels is how often Jesus paused, stepped back, and took time to be alone in order to draw closer to God. The gospels record over and over again that Jesus withdrew to a deserted place to pray (Mark 1:35; 6:31, 45–46; Luke 4:42; 5:16; 6:12; Matthew 26:38–42). It makes one wonder, if even Jesus needed time to be alone with the Father, how much more do we? We find ourselves entrenched in a world of tremendous need bent on maintaining a breakneck pace; even so, how can we grow in an awareness of and faithfulness to God's larger purposes?





The great, guiding assumption of Scripture and church history is that God is always and already up to something good in our lives and our communities. Our burden as Jesus followers is not to do some sort of dancing-bear act for God so He will do something good, as if God was reluctant or disinterested. Instead, our primary responsibility is to cultivate deep attention to the work God is already doing. We are immersed in God's creative, redemptive, and saving drama in the world, but are we growing in our attentiveness to it?

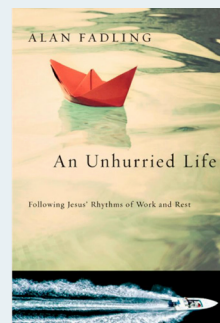
We each need pause in our lives. We must find our deserted place to pray if we hope to engage the world compassionately like Jesus. We need extended times and quiet places to stop, to reflect, to pray. For there we encounter more deeply our uniqueness as persons in God's image; we experience our brokenness and deep need; we discover we are not alone; we find the Father graciously drawing us to Himself, assuring us that we are loved and forgiven; and we recognize the Spirit inviting us to join in on Jesus's healing and mending mission in the world and in our community.

So, take some time over the next couple days and ask yourself a few questions with the Lord: Is there any pause in your life? Is your schedule and pace such that it consistently draws your attention away from what you consider to be the most important things in your life? Have you found a deserted place to pray along the way? Where might the Spirit of God be inviting you to a deeper relational life with God and others? ■

## VANTAGEPOINT<sup>3</sup>

*VantagePoint3 partners with leaders who are looking for ways to deepen and develop adults in their community. Over 13,000 adults have gone through VantagePoint3's faith-deepening and life-aligning process, The Journey, in the past 15 years. Learn more at [vantagepoint3.org](http://vantagepoint3.org).*

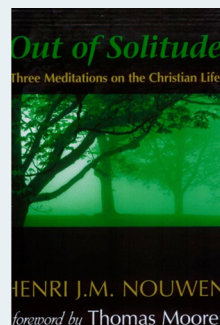
### Resources for Rest



#### **An Unhurried Life: Following Jesus' Rhythms of Work and Rest**

Alan Fadling

Fadling shows how the work of "unhurrying" ourselves is central to our spiritual development in such pivotal areas as resisting temptation, caring for others, praying and making disciples.



#### **Out of Solitude: Three Meditations on the Christian Life**

Henri Nouwen

Drawing on three moments in the life of Jesus, Henri Nouwen invites us to reflect on the tension between our desire for solitude and the demands of contemporary life.





# Stewarding *Our Time*



**Bob Glim**  
VP Marketing  
Church Investors Fund

**T**he last I checked, there are still only 24 hours in a day. God set this up when He created the heavens and the earth, and it is our job to accomplish the things He calls us to do within those 24 hours. The problem is that life seems to get quicker every day. There just don't seem to be enough hours in a day to do the things we need to do.

When we have time, we feel the need to fill it with something else. Although “something else” may not have even been on our radar moments earlier, once it pops into our head it suddenly joins the list of urgent things that must get done. Any downtime is viewed as time wasted.

When I was in my mid-twenties, I worked for a graphic arts company in downtown Chicago. With a wife and two kids at home, I believed the more overtime I worked, the better I could provide for them. In the month of November, I worked every day, averaging almost eighty hours a week, not including the roughly twelve hours spent traveling back and forth to work every week. I hadn't seen sunlight in over a month because there were no windows in my office area. I was exhausted, I missed my family, and I just didn't see any light on the horizon.

I don't remember the exact day in December, but I remember waking up one morning with a pain in my lower, right side. I was very busy and just didn't have time to get it checked. So I did what most people do; I ignored it. Unfortunately, ignoring it became more and more challenging. One Sunday I had the day off and decided to go Christmas shopping with my wife. I was miserable, but the stubborn side of me pressed on. That night my wife had enough and checked my temperature – over 104 degrees

Fahrenheit. She rushed me to the hospital, where I was quickly diagnosed with appendicitis. It had gotten so bad that I had to spend a week in the hospital. The doctor at one point told my wife that if I had waited even one more day it could have been fatal.

I ignored rest and failed to listen to what God was trying to tell me. I believe this was God's way of saying, "Okay, you don't want to listen, then I'm going to make you listen." It was during that week that I felt God's healing and guiding hand upon me. It wasn't an overnight fix, but in time I was able to make some adjustments and eventually find a job that allowed me to work a regular workweek and finally spend time with those I loved most – God and my family.

The result of our desire to go, go, go and never rest can be debilitating to our relationship with God. If we neglect our time alone with God, we will fail to hear God's direction for our lives. We begin to forget who we are, what truly matters, and how God would have us glorify Him.

In Matthew 6:25–34, we are told not to worry about life and that our heavenly Father will look after us if we "seek first his kingdom and his righteousness."

I believe many feel they can still do it all, including maintaining a healthy relationship with God; we just need to be efficient with our time. Now, I for one am enamored with efficiency, but there is a major difference between being efficient and being a good steward of time. When we are efficient we can get much done with the time we have, allowing us to check more off our to-do list. When we are good stewards, we have a healthy attitude about our time. We understand our relationship with God is a priority and that rest and relaxation are vital in living a healthy life that best brings glory to God.

If we don't make time to foster our relationship with God and spend quality time with friends and family, then we will be unable to best serve Him in the ways He has called us. ■

## Charitable Remainder Trust

The **Church Investors Fund Charitable Remainder Trust (CRT)** provides you the opportunity to:

- Receive a consistent income for life
- Receive a higher interest rate
- Receive a substantial tax deduction
- Help build churches today and for future generations
- Leave a lasting legacy

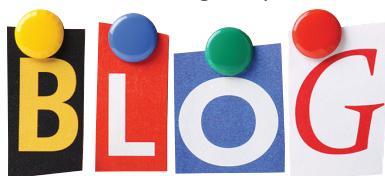
For additional information, please call us at 1-800-543-2343.



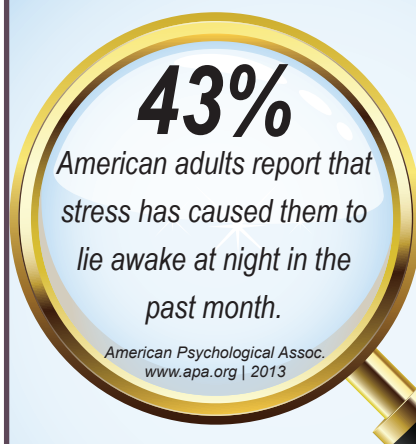
## Visit Our Blog

We invite you to visit our website and read our weekly blogs. We have different writers, so you can always find something of interest.

You can also email us at [blog@cifinc.org](mailto:blog@cifinc.org) and sign up to receive a new blog every week.



## Focus on the Facts



## Church Investors Fund

*Building up the Church, One Investor at a Time*



9401 E Stockton Blvd., Suite 240  
Elk Grove, CA 95624



800-543-2343



[ceif@ceif.org](mailto:ceif@ceif.org)



[www.ChurchInvestorsFund.org](http://www.ChurchInvestorsFund.org)



[www.facebook.com/ChurchInvestorsFund](https://www.facebook.com/ChurchInvestorsFund)





# Our Faithful & Fallible Heroes



**Randy Tschetter**  
Director  
NAB Heritage Commission



**R**ecently my wife and I were discussing possible destinations for a winter-time vacation (or holiday as Canadians say). One option was to spend a few days somewhere at an all-inclusive resort in a warm climate – just sitting on a beach and relaxing. Then I found myself asking, “What else is there to do?” and “Will I soon be bored if I am not doing something or going somewhere?”

With the exception of Sunday afternoon, I am not very good at just doing nothing. While I have slowed down a bit as I approach my seventieth birthday, I still feel compelled to keep on working. The thought of retirement scares me because, like many people, I seem to find self-worth in my work. I admit that I find it much easier to talk about the importance of Sabbath and rest than to actually practice them. To my detriment, I am not very proficient in the area of living into the words of the psalmist, “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10 NIV).

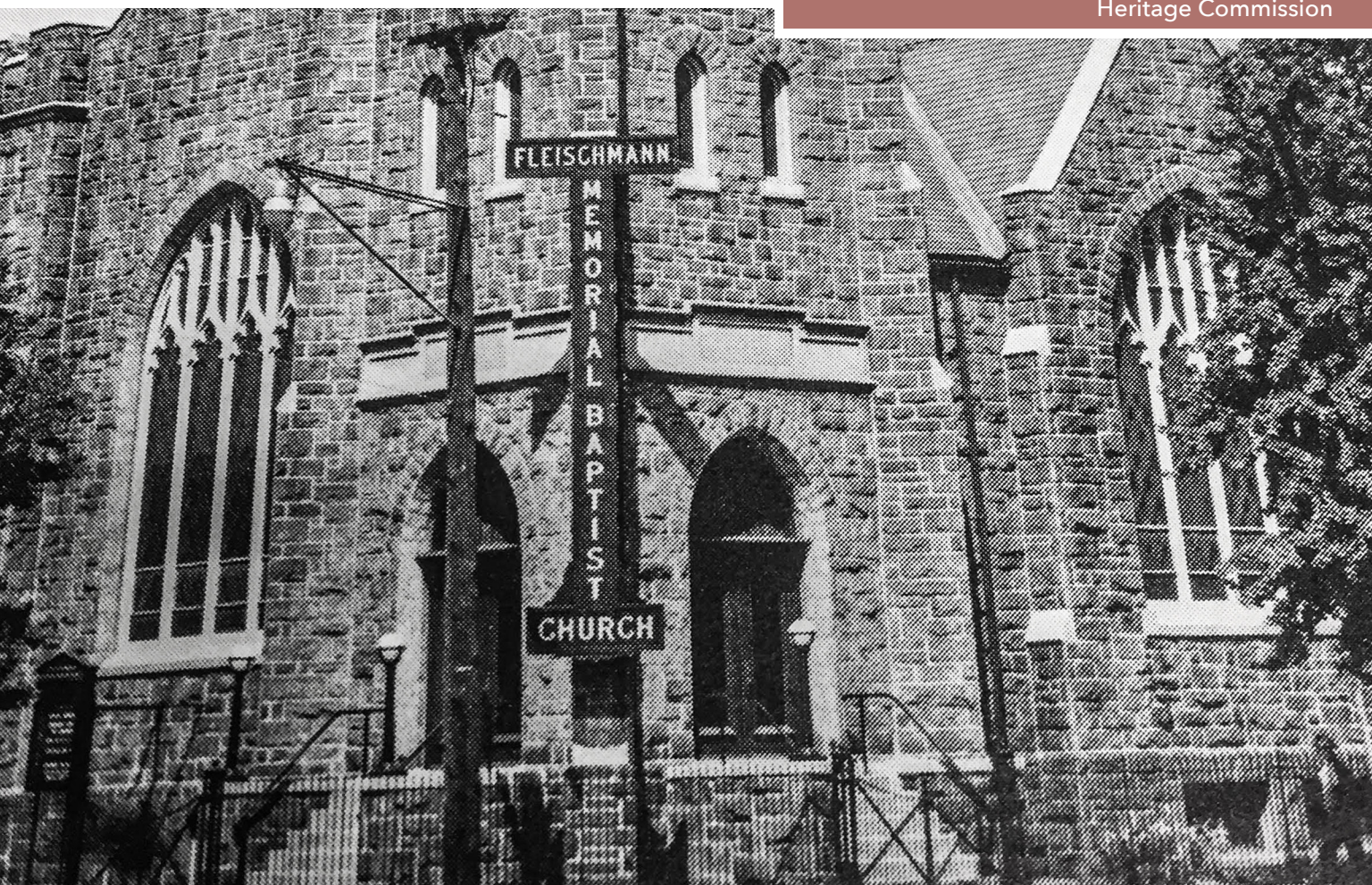
In my position with the North American Baptist Heritage Commission, I have been learning about the lives of men

and women of great faith and perseverance who might well be called heroes of the faith. Like the writer of the New Testament book of Hebrews, North American Baptists can truly say “we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses” (Hebrews 12:1). However, I have also been reminded that our heroes were imperfect human beings who struggled with many of the same challenges we face.

One such hero is Konrad Fleischmann, who in 1839 left Europe for North America as a missionary to the “unevangelized Germans.”<sup>1</sup> He spent several years in New Jersey and New York before turning his attention to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. As the Gospel was preached, small groups of people came to faith, and in 1843 the first NAB church, known as The Church of the Lord Meeting on Poplar Street, was organized. Fleischmann remained the pastor of the church (later named Fleischmann Memorial Baptist Church) for some twenty-

<sup>1</sup> Martin L. Leuschner, “Forward through God’s Open Doors,” in *These Glorious Years: The Centenary History of German Baptists of North America 1843–1943*, ed. Herman von Berge (Cleveland: Roger Williams Press 1943), 131.





five years, until his death in 1867. He was known for his “loyalty to his Lord, his love for his brethren, and his self-sacrificing interest in the denomination he helped to found.”<sup>2</sup> He served as editor of the denominational paper – *Der Sendbote des Evangeliums* – for nearly ten years. He was also remembered as a translator of hymns and was “the first of a large number of hymnists.”<sup>3</sup>

Years later, Martin Leuschner would write of Fleischmann that “he lived so intensely and zealously by this guiding principle of God for his life that he literally burned himself out and died at the comparatively young age of 55 years.”<sup>4</sup> Toward the end of his life, Fleischmann wrote in his diary, “I am all tired out from much work. My throat and my nerves are seriously affected.” He quotes (perhaps with some regret) the admonishment of a fellow pastor who cautioned him of the danger of “neglecting one’s health, even with the

best intentions of hard work, for the body is also God’s temple.”<sup>5</sup>

Mark Buchanan’s words ring true for all of us – even our heroes: “Unless we trust God’s sovereignty, we won’t dare risk Sabbath. And unless we receive time as abundance and gift, not as ration and burden, we’ll never develop a capacity to savor Sabbath.”<sup>6</sup> ■

<sup>5</sup> Leuschner, “Open Doors,” 132.

<sup>6</sup> Mark Buchanan, *The Rest of God: Restoring Your Soul by Restoring Sabbath*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), 62.

<sup>2</sup> A. J. Ramaker, “Earliest Beginnings of Our History,” in *These Glorious Years: The Centenary History of German Baptists of North America 1843–1943*, ed. Herman von Berge (Cleveland: Roger Williams Press 1943), 30.

<sup>3</sup> Ramaker, “Earliest Beginnings,” 31.

<sup>4</sup> Leuschner, “Open Doors,” 132.



[nabconference.org/nab-heritage-commission](http://nabconference.org/nab-heritage-commission)

[nabarchives@nabconf.org](mailto:nabarchives@nabconf.org)



SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

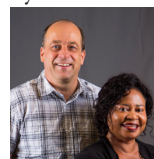
# INTERCESSOR

## MARCH 2018

### *Missional* ENGAGEMENT

**3** 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.

**4** Pray for Walter and Florence Grob's time with family and friends as they continue their home assignment. Pray for rest in the midst of connecting with churches and supporters.



**5** Pray for the Baptist Joint Committee meeting, which Dan Hamil, NAB executive director, is attending. The BJC is a faith-based agency devoted solely to religious liberty and the separation of church and state.

### *International* MISSIONS

**10** Pray for NAB missionaries to Hungary Ron and Jeannie Seck as they partner with churches and national missionaries to preach the Gospel in the midst of providing for tangible needs through Community Health Evangelism.

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

**12** Pray for VP of Church Planting and Ministry Advancement, Stu Streeter, as he meets this week with a pastors cluster in Detroit.



### *Leadership* FORMATION

**17** As the world celebrates St. Patrick, a British missionary to Ireland, spend time in prayer for our NAB missionaries, and be challenged to pray as he did, to truly make Christ the center.

**18** Pray for regional ministers Dr. Terry Fossen (Alberta Baptist Association) and Rev. Chris Gorman (Northwest Region). Ask God to continue to give them wisdom as they serve the pastors and churches in their area.

**19** 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.

### *Ethnic* PARTNERSHIP

**24** Pray for discernment for the Southern California Association as they seek a new regional minister.

**31** Pray for NAB national missionaries, that as we partner together, God's Spirit would move mightily.

**25** Today, on the International Day of Remembrance of Victims of Slavery and Transatlantic Slave Trade, pray for justice for those in our world who still suffer under the yoke of slavery.

**26** Lift up the Christian church in Russia today. Praise God for the way He is using the church there and for Gary Clatterbuck. Pray also for the future of the seminary as the government tries to take more control of it.



## WEDNESDAY

## THURSDAY

## FRIDAY

## SATURDAY

**1** Pray for the development of young leaders in the NAB family. Pray that their gifts are used in your church and their spiritual development grows as they serve God and His Kingdom.

**2** 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.



**6** Pray for our seminaries around the globe. Pray for wisdom for the professors as they prepare students for ministry, for the students to do their best to take full advantage of what they are learning, and for perseverance as they seek to balance all of their responsibilities.

**7** Dan Hamil is on the Board of Directors for the National Board of Evangelicals, which meets this week. Pray that these meetings would be fruitful.

**8** Pray for Jeff and Sonya Kilmartin as they minister to the Fulbe people in Cameroon and Nigeria.



**9** As most of Canada and the US prepare to set their clocks forward for Daylight Savings, pray that this would be a reminder to use our time effectively, living each day for God's glory.

**13** Pray for the believers and churches in the midst of heightened persecution where Nick and Iris are serving in East Asia.

**14** 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.



**15** Pray for the patients and staff at both Mbingo and Bango Baptist Hospitals in Cameroon, that God would continue using the staff to share Christ's love. Pray for the different facility and staffing needs to be met.

**16** Praise God for the new attendees and ministries at Heijo and Komyo Christian Churches in Japan. Pray for our NAB missionaries as they seek ways to meet the needs in these communities and as God raises up nationals into leadership roles.

**20** 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.

**21** 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.

**22** Pray for regional ministers Pastor Ken Solberg (Saskatchewan Baptist 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 those who are planting NAB churches. Ask God to give church planters encouragement and joy today as they reach their communities to join God on mission for Kingdom purposes.

**27** Pray for the pursuit of racial righteousness in your life and ministry. Pray for your heart to be open to God's guidance and direction for opportunities to grow.

**28** Pray for the White Cross ministry as they provide for direct and tangible participation in the Compassionate Care ministry of the North American Baptist Conference in Cameroon.

**29** Pray for Cross-Cultural Equipper Bud Fuchs as he continues working with international students in Utah and training churches how to effectively minister to internationals in their area.



**30** Pray for Gateway 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.

## SUNDAY

## MONDAY

## TUESDAY

## WEDNESDAY

**1** Pray for the women who are joining NAB's Women's Connection Leadership Team for the 2019 theme study, *Finding I Am* by Lysa TerKeurst.



**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.

**3** Pray for the various special projects on each of our international mission fields. These projects provide valuable resources to the ministries our missionaries are involved with. You can view this list at [nabconference.org/special-projects](http://nabconference.org/special-projects).

**7** Pray today as churches around the conference partner with Global Missions efforts by partaking in Missions Sunday. Giving to the Global Missions Fund helps to provide support services to assist missionaries, allowing them to focus more time and attention on the ministry at hand.

**8** Pray for NAB partners, the Japan Baptist Conference, the Cameroon Baptist Convention, and the Hungarian Baptist Convention of Romania.

**9** Ethos is a two-year missional journey set within the context of an individual NAB region. Pray for the Ethos cohorts that are meeting this week in Southern California as well as in the Great Lakes Association.

**10** Pray for interim VP of International Missions, Kerry Bender, and the Missions Advisory Team as they prepare for the Global Summit, a gathering next month in Argentina of missionaries from all NAB fields to strengthen leadership and further develop our work around the world.

**14** 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.

**15** Pray for regional ministers Dr. Terry Fossen (Alberta Baptist Association) and Rev. Chris Gorman (Northwest Region). Ask God to continue to give them wisdom as they serve the pastors and churches in their area.

**16** Pray for NAB's Youth Ministry Leadership Team as they spend time, prayer, and resources planning and preparing to encourage, bless, and speak into youth workers from around the conference at The Summit, April 23–26.

**17** Pray for the Ethos cohorts that are meeting this week in the Upper Mississippi Region with Jim Renke.



**21** Pray for your pastor as he preaches on Easter; lift up those who will hear the Gospel for the first time; ask God to speak to your heart this Easter season.



**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 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.

**24** Pray for the Youth Workers' Summit happening this week in Phoenix, Arizona. Pray that those attending would be blessed and encouraged as they receive teaching, worship together, and meet with other youth workers throughout the NAB.

**28** Pray for those who were guests in your church on Easter. Pray the Holy Spirit continues to stir in them a desire to know God and to seek His presence in their lives.

**29** Thank God for the ability to worship freely, and pray for the believers in other countries who do not have that privilege.

**30** Pray for the Blue Ocean meetings in Chicago over the next couple days as pastors and leaders in the NAB meet to share with, learn from, and challenge one another concerning mission and formation.

## THURSDAY

**4** 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.



## FRIDAY

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

## SATURDAY

**6** 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

**11** Pray for NAB missionaries and international churches as they plan and prepare for Easter services around the globe.

**12** Pray for the Jones family as they continue to adjust to life on the mission field in Brazil. Pray for their ministry efforts training ministers of the Gospel through theological education.



**13** 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.



## International MISSIONS

**18** Praise God for the ways He has challenged you over this Lent season. Ask Him to prepare your heart to celebrate His resurrection well and that you would be a testimony of the great things He has done.

**19** Thank God throughout the day as we commemorate the death of Jesus on the cross, which bridged the gap between God and mankind once and for all.

**20** Pray for regional ministers Pastor Ken Solberg (Saskatchewan Baptist 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.

## Leadership FORMATION

**25** 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. Pray for God's leading in partnering with missionaries and churches in other locations.

**26** Pray for the Atlantic Association meetings this weekend and for Regional Minister Larry Burd, as well as for NAB executive director, Dan Hamil, who will be participating. Pray for fruitful discussion and encouragement during this time.



**27** 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.

## Ethnic PARTNERSHIP

# INTERCESSOR APRIL 2018





1219 Pleasant Grove Blvd.  
Roseville, CA 95678

# THE SUMMIT

It's not too late to join us at The Summit!

[nabconference.org/nabstudents/The-Summit/](http://nabconference.org/nabstudents/The-Summit/)

Registration ends March 15, 2019.